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VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE POST-IMPRESSIONISTS

University — Université

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M.A

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade 1981	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse HENRY KREISEL

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VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE POST-IMPRESSIONISTS

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1981

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

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TITLE OF THESIS "VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THE POST-IMPRESSIONISTS"

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ABSTRACT

In her novels, and in her critical statements, Virginia Woolf shows, for a writer, an unusual interest in some aspects of the painted work of art, particularly the work of the Post-Impressionist artists. She is keenly interested in form, colour, unity and order. Indeed, her interest in these subjects is such that it suggests that she is somewhat influenced by the sister art. In this study we examine two of her novels, Mrs. Dalloway, and To the Lighthouse in the light of this discovery in an attempt to determine whether a writer can be profitably guided by the stipulations of a painter.

In the course of the thesis we examine the critical statements of Roger Fry and the effect which his 1910 Post-Impressionist exhibition had on Bloomsbury and consequently Virginia Woolf. As well, we examine the theories of Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin as three excellent examples of the artists of the Post-Impressionist period.

A comparison of the beliefs of Virginia Woolf with those of Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin, while bearing in mind Fry's interpretation of the principles of these painters, leads us naturally to the assumption that Virginia Woolf was strongly influenced by the Post-Impressionists. It leads also to the conclusion that much of the influence was received by way of

Roger Fry, and this partly through his Post-Impressionist exhibitions and partly through the friendly discussions on art which were often initiated by him in the Bloomsbury circle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my gratitude to Professor Henry Kreisel, supervisor of the thesis and to the other members of the examining committee.

I wish also to thank my Grandmother, Mrs. Virginia Griffith, my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Emerson Griffith, and my brothers and sisters, especially Monica for their support and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

I THE EFFECT OF POST-IMPRESSIONISM ON BLOOMSBURY .. 6

II ROGER FRY AND SIGNIFICANT FORM 19

III VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THREE POST-IMPRESSIONIST PAINTERS 34

- Cézanne 37
- Van Gogh 44
- Gauguin 47
- Colour 51
- Virginia Woolf 56

IV THE NOVELS 69

- Mrs. Dalloway 74
- To the Lighthouse 93

CONCLUSION 144

BIBLIOGRAPHY 150

INTRODUCTION

> Can a writer of prose fiction borrow profoundly from another art form? Can he utilize in language the techniques of a painter, techniques developed and expressed in paint?[1]

The above quotation, taken from Emily Stripes Watts' Ernest Hemingway and the Arts, phrases succinctly the question which forms the basis of this study. Could the painting of the Post-Impressionist artists have had any influence on the fiction of Virginia Woolf? Certainly Roger Fry, who figures prominently in this study, seems to think that the answer to Emily Stripes Watts' question is in the affirmative. Although he is mainly interested in the art of painting, he does from time to time make enlightening remarks concerning literature. In her biography of Roger Fry, Virginia Woolf tells us that Fry believed that

> Literature was suffering from a plethora of old cloths. Cézanne and Picasso had shown the way; writers should fling representation to the winds and follow suit. But he never found time to work out his theory of the influence of Post-Impressionism upon literature.[2]

This remark suggests that Roger Fry not only felt that art could influence literature but that it should.

Although Virginia Woolf never speaks about the influence of art upon her own work, she makes several statements about its influence on other writers who interest her:

> Probably some professor has written a book on the subject. . . . "The loves of the Arts" --that is more or less the title it would bear, and it would be concerned with the flirtations between music, letters, sculpture, and architecture, and the effects that the arts have had upon each other throughout the ages. . . . It would seem that literature has always been the most sociable and the most impressionable of them all; that sculpture influenced Greek literature, music Elizabethan, architecture the English of the eighteenth century, and now undoubtedly we are under the dominion of painting.[3]

Virginia Woolf claims too that

> Were all modern paintings to be destroyed, a critic of the twenty-fifth century would be able to deduce from the works of Proust alone the existence of Matisse, Cézanne, Derain, and Picasso; he would be able to say with those books before him that painters of the highest originality and power must be covering canvas after canvas, squeezing tube after tube, in the room next door.[4]

Because Virginia Woolf mentions repeatedly the relationship between painting and literature, and so obviously considers it to be the art which most influenced the literature of her contemporaries, it seems fitting that we should consider the question of the influence of art on her own work. An attempt will be made to establish as nearly as possible the relationship between two of Virginia Woolf's eight novels and Post-Impressionist painting. Of particular interest will be Cézanne, often said to be the father of Post-Impressionism and modern painting, and of whom Virginia Woolf says:

> Cézanne, for example --no painter is more provocative of the literary sense, because his pictures are so audaciously and provocatively content to be paint that the

> very pigment . . . seems to challenge us, to
> press some nerve, to stimulate, to excite.[5]

One chapter of this study will be devoted to the effect of Post-Impressionism on Bloomsbury. Another will be devoted to Roger Fry and his views on aesthetics and significant form, because in the first place, Roger Fry is the great figure behind the Post-Impressionist exhibition held in England in 1910. This exhibition shocked British laymen, artists and art critics alike and influenced young writers and painters of the period. In the second place, his views on aesthetics and significant form are important when seen in the light of Virginia Woolf's experiments in form. Chapter III deals with the theories of Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin, three prominent Post-Impressionists. Chapter IV discusses the novels and tries to discover to what extent Fry and these three Post-Impressionists influenced Virginia Woolf.

Referring to the influence which painting had on Proust's work, Virginia Woolf says:

> It is extremely difficult to put one's finger
> on the precise spot where paint makes itself
> felt in the work of so complete a writer.[6]

Undoubtedly the same applies in the case of her own work. It will be difficult to determine the exact nature of the influence, particularly because the medium of the writer differs so greatly from that of the painter.

The two novels which are to be discussed in this study are Mrs. Dalloway, (1925) and To the Lighthouse, (1927). Virginia Woolf wrote six other novels: The Voyage Out (1915); Night and Day (1919); Jacob's Room (1923); The Waves (1931); The Years

(1937); and *Between the Acts* (1941). These will not be included in this study. The decision to study *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* was made because these two novels were written at the time when Virginia Woolf and Roger Fry worked most closely together. Therefore, it was felt that these two novels, would, if any, bear evidence of the influence of Fry and the Post-Impressionists on Virginia Woolf's work. Much of her critical writings will be studied in this thesis since they play as important a part in her development as do her novels.

ch

NOTES

[1] Emily Stripes Watts, "Introduction", Ernest Hemingway and the Arts, p. xiii.

[2] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 172.

[3] Virginia Woolf, "Pictures", The Moment and Other Essays, p. 140.

[4] Virginia Woolf, "Pictures", The Moment and Other Essays, p. 140.

[5] Virginia Woolf, "Pictures", The Moment and Other Essays, p. 142.

[6] Virginia Woolf, "Pictures", The Moment and Other Essays, p. 140.

CHAPTER I

THE EFFECT OF POST-IMPRESSIONISM ON BLOOMSBURY

The period in painting which we now know as Post-Impressionism started in Paris with such painters as Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin. It was not an organized movement, but merely the reaction of individual artists to the theories and attitudes of such Impressionists as Monet, Renoir, Pissaro, Degas, and Rodin. Although the theories of the so-called Post-Impressionists often resemble each other, there was little attempt on the part of these artists to arrive at a consensus against the Impressionists. On the contrary, Cézanne did not appear to find any similarities between his work and that of Van Gogh and Gauguin, for, at least on one occasion, he is known to have spoken disparagingly of their work.

Cézanne, although he made no attempt to act as leader, is often said to be the father of Post-Impressionism. Certainly, the British artists who were later influenced by Post-Impressionism --Clive and Vanessa Bell; Virginia and Leonard Woolf; and Roger Fry-- felt him to be. The effects of this movement away from Impressionism were not felt in Britain until some years later. As Frank Rutter tells us

> It was not until after the Post-Impressionist exhibition at the Grafton Galleries —1910 that any considerable number of British artists were

> affected by the movements which already agitated Paris.[1]

Yet, ironically, it is the British who give the movement its name:

> Post-Impressionism is a word invented in 1910 by Mr. Roger Fry to cover a number of new movements --reactionary or progressive, according to our point of view-- which succeeded Impressionism.[2]

Since this chapter is chiefly concerned with the effect of Post-Impressionism on Bloomsbury, it is perhaps necessary to present the various members of the group and explain briefly how the name was acquired. The original members of the Bloomsbury Group were, of course, Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Leonard Woolf, Clive Bell, Adrian Stephens, Duncan Grant, Saxton Sydney Turner, Lytton Strachey and Maynard Keynes. Later were to be added Roger Fry, E.M. Forster and Desmond McCarthy. There were other minor members of the group, but those mentioned above formed the nucleus.

The Bloomsbury Group was not a formally organized body. Merely, its members met socially to discuss art and aesthetics in a relaxed and friendly manner. Certainly the members of the group never referred to themselves by the name with which society labelled them. The name was chosen for them because the great majority of the members lived in the Bloomsbury area and the informal gatherings were held in one or another of their Bloomsbury homes. The name has come to hold more definite and fixed connotations in the present time than it ever did when these friends met for their casual discussions and sharing of ideas on aesthetics. More than one of its members denied the existence of such a group --Clive Bell, Virginia Woolf, and Desmond McCarthy for instance; or at least denied being a part of it even if it did exist.

Roger Fry, older than most of the other members of Bloomsbury, first became a part of the group in 1910. His ideas regarding art and aesthetics and his zealous championship of the French Post-Impressionists greatly appealed to these young and upcoming artists. His Post-Impressionist exhibition opened in November, 1910, and shocked the British public. It is important to see how deeply this shock went in order to understand just how controversial an issue it was and how revolutionary, therefore, Bloomsbury was being by championing Roger Fry and accepting his ideas. Virginia Woolf comments at length on the effect which this exhibition had on the public:

> It is difficult in 1939 . . . to realize what violent emotions those pictures excited less than thirty years ago. . . . The public in 1910 was thrown into paroxysms of rage and laughter. They went from Cézanne to Gauguin and from Gauguin to Van Gogh, they went from Picasso to Signac and from Derain to Friesz, and they were infuriated. . . . Never less than four hundred people visited the gallery daily. And they expressed their opinions not only to the secretary but in letters to the director himself. The pictures were outrageous, anarchistic and childish. They were an insult to the British public and the man who was responsible for the insult was either a fool, an impostor, or a knave.[3]

Quentin Bell has a similar description of the effect of the 1910 exhibition on the public:

> [Roger Fry] took the Grafton Gallery and gave London its first real taste of the Post-Impressionists. The effect was an explosion of public wrath which, although it has often been described, is barely credible today, and one which made Fry the best-hated man in the London art world.[4]

Art critics on the whole reacted no more favourably to the pictures on display, although they were "naturally more measured and temperate in their strictures."[5] Virginia Woolf mentions only one London critic, Sir Charles Holmes, who spoke at all favourably of Fry's exhibition. One leading critic who wrote for The Times said disparagingly that Post-Impressionism "professes to simplify, and to gain simplicity it throws away all that the long-developed skill of past artists had acquired and perpetuated. It begins all over again-- and stops where a child would."[6] This critic goes on to criticise the influence which primitive art had on the Post-Impressionists: "Really primitive art is attractive because it is unconscious; but this is deliberate --it is a rejection of all that civilization has done, the good with the bad."[7]

The artists too had their say. One school of artists, the older artists chiefly, felt that this movement was mainly reactionary and transitory in content. They refused to take it seriously. One artist, Eric Gill, wrote to another, Sir William Rothenstein, in a far from constructive manner about his impressions of the exhibition: "Gauguin makes the biggest splash and Van Gogh the maddest."[8] Another, Mr. Picketts, suspected that the Post-Impressionist artists whose work was on display, were to some degree insane. One art lover, Wilfred Blunt, in his diary referred to the pictures on display as: "works of idleness and impotent stupidity, a pornographic show."[9]

In his article "Retrospect" Roger Fry speaks of the startling reaction to the art displayed at the Grafton Gallery in 1910:

> I tried in vain to explain what appeared to me so clear, that the modern movement was essentially a return to the ideas of formal design which had been almost lost sight of in the fervid pursuit of naturalistic representation. I found that the cultured public . . . now regarded me as either incredibly flippant or, far the more charitable explanation was usually adopted, slightly insane. In fact I found among the cultured . . . the most inveterate and exasperated enemies of the new movement. The accusation of anarchism was constantly made. . . . The cultured public was determined to look upon Cézanne as an incompetent bungler, and upon the whole movement as madly revolutionary.[10]

There was one group of individuals, however, who reacted favourably to the Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910. These were the younger artists, many of whom belonged to the Bloomsbury group. As Sir William Rothenstein states, "Fry thenceforth became the central figure around whom the more advanced of the young English painters grouped themselves."[11] Virginia Woolf says of this influence: "The first Post-Impressionist Exhibition, as many of them have testified, was to . . . [the younger artists] a revelation; it was to affect their work profoundly. And to explain and to expound the meaning of the new movement, to help the young English painters to leave the little back-water of provincial art and to take their place in the main stream, became from this time one of Roger Fry's main preoccupations."[12] Roger Fry is himself sensible of his own influence on these young artists:

> In contrast to its effect on the cultured public the Post-Impressionist exhibition aroused a keen interest among a few of the younger English artists and their friends. With them I began to discuss the problems of aesthetic that the contemplation of these works forced upon us.[13]

Quentin Bell also mentions the influence of Roger Fry on the younger artists:

> There was a section of Bloomsbury which could hardly have avoided being drawn into this turmoil. Clive Bell as a critic, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant as painters, were completely whole-hearted in their acceptance of Roger Fry's views --if not all his theories-- . . . for the rest the business must have been puzzling. . . . But it was difficult when Roger Fry had a cause at heart, for his friends not to find themselves involved in it.[14]

Quentin Bell credits Fry with an even more constructive influence. He says that "It was through him, rather than through Clive Bell, that the Group established a close rapport with Paris, the Paris of Matisse, Derain, Picasso, Segonzac, Appollinaire, and Vildac. It was through his influence, warmly seconded by Clive Bell, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, and to a lesser extent by Lytton Strachey, that Bloomsbury became, on the whole, Francophile. It was certainly under his influence that Clive Bell wrote Art, in 1914."[15]

Desmond McCarthy wrote an introduction to the 1910 exhibition, of which he was made secretary. In this introduction he said, "there is no denying that the work of the Post-Impressionists is sufficiently disconcerting. It may even appear ridiculous to those who do not recall the fact that a good rocking-horse has often more of the true horse about it than an instantaneous photograph of a Derby winner."[16] He shows by this statement that already he has begun to be influenced by Roger Fry's theory of significant form and representation.

Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant have had really very little to say about the effect of Post-Impressionism on their work. Its influence is obvious in their paintings, however. Tangible proof of the influence which Fry and Post-Impressionism had on the work of the young artists can be found in the scheme in 1911 to decorate the Borough Polytechnic with London scenes. Such artists as Roger Fry, Duncan Grant, Frederic Etchells, Bernard Adeney, Albert Rutherson and Max Gill had a hand in these decorations. Richard Shone tells us that

> These murals give an indication of the invigorating effect of the Grafton Galleries exhibition. As Vanessa Bell later recalled, young artists in England needed to be rescued: '. . . here was a sudden pointing to a possible path, a sudden liberation and encouragement to feel for oneself which were absolutely overwhelming. . . . [I]t was as if at last one might say things one had always felt instead of trying to say things that other people told one to feel.[17]

Fry, with Post-Impressionism, had therefore brought these young artists the freedom they craved subconsciously. By the time of the second Post-Impressionist exhibition, which opened on 5th

October, 1912, the younger English artists were completely part of the Post-Impressionist movement, as it had by now become. Among those who had works on display at this exhibition were Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell and, of course, Roger Fry -- all friends of Virginia Woolf. Furthermore, Vanessa Bell used her skill as an artist and her newly awakened Post-Impressionist ideas to promote her interest in designing and decorating. Shone says of her:

> Vanessa's deep feeling for Matisse's work with its insistence on the painted surface and passion for clarity becomes more apparent in the necessarily flat organization of space in textile design. The release of pure colour which decorative work . . . seemed to bring about, supported by a similar clarification of form, led her quite naturally to some of the earliest pure abstractions in modern British painting.[18]

Shone tells us further of Duncan Grant's and Vanessa Bell's involvement in the Post-Impressionist movement:

> Neither Duncan Grant nor Vanessa Bell were eager exhibitors. . . . Nor were they eager participants in groups but with Roger Fry in their midst they became much more involved in exhibiting and came to know a wider circle of painters. They were launched into the movement.[19]

Repeatedly then we get a picture of Roger Fry as a man who possessed intensive drive and energy and who was capable of instilling a similar motivation into those around him. Such a picture makes it very easy to understand his ability to influence the artists in his circle --writers and painters alike-- and his ability to arouse their interest in Post-Impressionist painting. In spite of the unfavourable comments made by artists, critics and other members of the English public, the Post-Impressionist Exhibition of 1910 can be considered "a prodigious success" as Clive Bell claims:

> It set all England talking about contemporary painting and sent the more alert not only to Paris but to museums and collections where they could have a look at primitive, Oriental and savage art.[20]

But the Post-Impressionist movement touched more than just painting, as Virginia Woolf is quick to point out:

> The Post-Impressionist movement . . . was by no means confined to painting. [Fry] read books by the light of it too. It put him on the tract of new ideas everywhere. . . . There it was --this reality the thing that the artists had managed to say, now in Frances Cornford, now in Wordsworth, now in Marie Claire. . . . But it was not where it was expected to be. He laid sacrilegious hands upon the classics. He found glaring examples in Shakespeare, in Shelley, of the writer's vice of distorting reality, of importing impure associations, of contaminating the streams with adjectives and metaphors.[21]

Undoubtedly, Virginia Woolf was among the young artists who joined in the discussions on aesthetics earlier mentioned by Roger Fry as one of the results of viewing the display of Post-Impressionist paintings in 1910. According to Virginia Woolf, Fry at one time proposed to establish a broadsheet in which the arts of painting and writing were to be discussed simultaneously. Such a broadsheet would take into consideration the recently developed theories in aesthetics as discussed by the Bloomsbury group. Because Fry was unable to finance this venture, regrettably, it came to nothing. However, the mere attempt suggests the kind of free, open discussion which must have gone back and forth between the members of the Bloomsbury group about art and aesthetics.

That Virginia Woolf admired Roger Fry and was influenced by him, perhaps unconsciously, becomes obvious in a number of ways. It is ironic that, without linking the Post-Impressionist Exhibition to her statement, she says, "On or about December 1, 1910 human character changed."[22] This is, of course, a rather sweeping and generalized statement, as Virginia Woolf herself admits. This is not the issue, however. What is noteworthy is that she dates this supposed change in human character one month after the opening of the Post-Impressionist Exhibition in November, 1910. This suggests that the change was not necessarily a change in human character, but rather a change in Virginia Woolf's perception of it, influenced undoubtedly by her contact with Post-Impressionism. Her perception was no doubt touched by the changing perspectives and objectives of the Post-Impressionists. For example, Virginia Woolf sees a change in the personality of the contemporary maid from that of the Victorian maid. She simply puts this change down to the aforementioned change in human character:

> The Victorian cook lived like a leviathan in the lower depths, formidable, silent, obscure, inscrutable; the Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air; in and out of the drawing room, now to borrow The Daily Herald, now to ask advice about a hat.[23]

Fry too recognizes this change in the servants of the two periods, but he connects the change with modern, Post-Impressionist art. Whereas, he says, the cook of former days could not understand the work of art, the modern cook feels free to discuss contemporary art:

> It was felt that one could only appreciate Amico de Sandro when one had acquired a certain considerable mass of erudition and given a great deal of time and attention, but to admire a Matisse required only a certain sensibility. One could feel fairly sure that one's maid could not rival one in the former case, but might by a mere haphazard gift of Providence surpass one in the second.[24]

The fact that both Fry and Virginia Woolf mention the apparent change in the disposition of the maid does appear to be coincidental, but surely, this question must have been raised at some of the informal Bloomsbury meetings mentioned earlier.

It would perhaps be more accurate to speak of Roger Fry's influence on Virginia Woolf's work, or for that matter on Bloomsbury, than it would be to speak of the influence of any particular Post-Impressionist. For example three of the major Post-Impressionist figures --Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin-- were all dead by the time of the first Post-Impressionist Exhibition, when Virginia Woolf and many other of the young artists first came in touch with the new movement. Van Gogh died in 1890; Gauguin in 1903; and Cézanne in 1906. It is sufficient to say, however, that Virginia Woolf's knowledge of the Post-Impressionists and any influence which they may have had on her was acquired second hand for the most part, through Roger Fry; through his 1910 exhibition and through the many discussions which the two artists might have had during their frequent meetings in Bloomsbury.

NOTES

[1] Frank Rutter, Evolution in Modern Art: A Study in Modern Painting 1870-1925, p. 122.

[2] Frank Rutter, p. 123.

[3] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, pp. 153-154.

[4] Quentin Bell, Bloomsbury, p. 50.

[5] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p.154.

[6] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 155.

[7] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 155.

[8] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 156.

[9] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 157.

[10] Roger Fry, Vision & Design, pp. 192-193.

[11] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 159.

[12] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 159.

[13] Roger Fry, Vision & Design, p. 193.

[14] Quentin Bell, Bloomsbury, p. 52.

[15] Quentin Bell, Bloomsbury, p.

[16] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 153

[17] Richard Shone, Bloomsbury Portraits, p. 73.

[18] Richard Shone, Bloomsbury Portraits, pp. 79-80.

[19] Richard Shone, Bloomsbury Portraits, p. 66.

[20] Richard Shone, Bloomsbury Portraits, p. 64.

[21] Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, p. 172.

[22] Virginia Woolf, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, p. 4.

[23] Virginia Woolf, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, p. 5.

[24] Roger Fry, Vision and Design, pp. 192-193.

CHAPTER II

ROGER FRY AND SIGNIFICANT FORM

In this study of Virginia Woolf and Post-Impressionist painting it is inevitable that we devote some time to Roger Fry and his theories on questions of form, aesthetics and the work of art. A member of the Bloomsbury group, Fry was generally interested in art and artists and in the many illusive questions regarding aesthetics. Virginia Woolf was primarily concerned with literature, Fry with painting. The two, therefore, act as complements of each other in this study. They form, as it were, the two sides of a single coin.

As well as being artists in their own right, both Virginia Woolf and Roger Fry wrote articles outlining those theories which they attempted to put into practice in their own work. As mentioned earlier, Fry's chief interest was in the visual arts, particularly painting. Frequently, however, Virginia Woolf's writing might be studied with Fry's various stipulations in mind, meant though they generally are for painters. The novels of Virginia Woolf in some ways appear to be realisations of Fry's theories; theories which Fry often applied to Post-Impressionist art and found to to be sound. Many of the statements the Post-Impressionists did not themselves make, but they can be found expressed in their work. It is important to remember that Virginia Woolf would have seen the Post-Impressionist paintings under the aegis of Fry. It is necessary, therefore, to outline the manner in which Fry felt that an artist 'realized'. In this chapter, therefore, we will make a close examination of Fry's statements regarding aesthetics and the related subject, significant form. In a later chapter we will attempt to apply these theories to the novels to be discussed.

Clive Bell, also one of the Bloomsbury group, gave currency to the term "significant form" in his work, Art, published in 1914. The term suited Fry's purposes and he borrowed it. This term is today more often connected with Roger Fry than it is with Clive Bell, who invented it. About significant form Fry says:

> We mean by significant form something other than agreeable arrangements of form, harmonies, patterns, and the like. We feel that a work which possesses it is the outcome of an endeavour to express an idea rather than a pleasing object.[1]

Fry feels that the work of art, whether a painting, a novel, a poem or a piece of sculpture, must have complete autonomy in order for it to be a pure work of art. Such a work, he feels, should exist completely within itself. It should not conform to the laws of everyday living, should depend on nothing outside itself to effect its own completeness, and above all should be judged by nothing which lies outside of itself. Such a work should make "no conscious reference to anything outside the actual work of art."[2] Its value is in itself. Time and place play no part in determining its purity or its value as a work of art. The work of art has intrinsic value. A work completed today is as capable of purity and significant form as a work completed hundreds of years earlier, and this is so because "every work of art which one enjoys with complete aesthetic apprehension becomes for the time being the spirit's universe."[3]

Fry explains how this is possible, and why the work of art has a significant existence without ever having to resort to considerations of time and place or to anything which exists outside itself. He emphasizes the vast difference that there is between actual life and the pure life from which the artist draws inspiration --the imaginative life. Fry believes that there are two kinds of life. The one is everyday or actual life, the other is imaginative life which is the recall of the events of actual life. Imaginative life serves to intensify and illuminate actual life. This recall occurs in our moments of quiet, of inactivity, and at such times we live again the incidents of past experience. According to Fry there is a possibility for greater or closer observance in our imaginative life, unhampered as it is by "instinctive reaction". Man has become adept at selecting only those elements and objects of actual life which are indispensible to his own daily life and survival. He sees only that portion of his surroundings which is deemed necessary for daily existence. Man's "instinctive reaction to sensible objects"[4] impair or limit his vision and his awareness of actual life. Consequently, in actual life man gets only a vague and partial image of the world in which he lives. He gets a complete picture of objects and events only in his imaginative life. Furthermore, in actual life man concentrates all his conscious efforts on instinctive reaction, whereas in imaginative life, since it is past experience, no instinctive action is necessary. In imaginative life man is allowed a certain detachment which increases his awareness. Because of this detachment and freedom, in imaginative life, man develops a completely different sense of values from those of actual life. Fry believes that in imaginative life

> We abstract ourselves completely and look upon the changing scene as a whole. It then, at once, takes on the visionary quality, and we become true spectators, not selecting what we will see, but seeing everything equally, and thereby we come to notice a number of appearances and relations of appearances, which would have escaped our vision before, owing to that perpetual economising by selection of what impressions we will assimilate, which in life we perform by unconscious processes.[5]

It is from imaginative life that the artistic vision emerges; from imaginative life, therefore, that the work of art is born. Roger Fry sees art as "the expression of imaginative life rather than a copy of actual life."[6] But the work of art is not merely a passive receptacle which is filled from imaginative life; rather, if Fry is to be believed, art in its turn stimulates imaginative life. It is upon these premises that he rests his demand for autonomy in art. Because art is set apart from actual life, it is freed from the moral responsibilities of actual life. For this reason the work of art presents "a life freed from the binding necessities of our actual existence."[7]

Fry refers to the process where, in his imaginative life, man sees all that is about him without selection or censure as pure vision --this is artistic vision. The work of art exists in Fry's view for no other reason than that of being seen, for, he says, it is only when something exists for no other reason that man really looks at it.

Since the emotions we experience in imaginative life are past emotions, they are of necessity weaker than those of actual life. Fry sees this in a favourable light. He feels it is conducive to clearer perception. The emotions of actual experience are too close to us to enable us to analyse them clearly. In imaginative life, however, we have dual perception, we watch the emotion as we experience it. Reproduced in a work of art, therefore, it is much more clearly perceived than in actual life.

On these grounds, then, does Fry repudiate mere representation in art. He claims that

> the full value of the representational element almost always depends on a reference to something outside the actual work of art.[8]

Johnstone makes an excellent paraphrase of Fry's views on the subject when he says that whenever the concerns of daily life are brought into the work of art through representation, "its values are substituted for aesthetic values, and the work of art arouses the instinctive, moral, and practical responses rather than the aesthetic emotion."[9] Fry feels that preoccupations with photographic representation often cause the artist to pay scant attention to form. He feels too that criticism which uses as its criterion the likeness or lack of likeness between art and life is invalid, since most people really do not look closely at the objects of their daily life, but see clearly only in imaginative life.

Uncontrolled, however, as in dreams or as a result of drugs, imaginative life does not serve any very useful purpose. It is only with "the teaching of experience and the growth of character that imaginative life comes to respond to other instincts and to satisfy other desires, until, indeed, it reflects the highest aspirations and the deepest aversions of which human nature is capable."[10] Clearly, Fry feels that in order for imaginative life to reach its fullest measure in art, it must be given form. Unformed and beyond man's control, imaginative life loses some of its attractiveness. Variety and order are two important aspects of art.

For Fry, significance in art does not go hand in hand with usefulness. Pure art does not aim at being useful. Fry, like Virginia Woolf and most of their group, feels art should exist simply for itself and not for its usefulness. Pure art does not deliver messages, nor suggest reform. It does not urge its audience to act in any manner whatsoever, except to experience the aesthetic emotion. Fry feels that if a storyteller

> relates his experience for the sake of the enjoyment of his adventure in retrospect, or . . . if he makes up the story for the sake of the

> imagined emotions, then his speech becomes a pure work of art.[11]

The work of art must not be judged by its effect on life but must be seen as "an expression of emotions regarded as ends in themselves."[12]

Fry feels that although order and variety might well be found in other objects which cannot be considered art, the pure work of art will have one distinguishing feature. In this lies its true significance. This significance is what he refers to as the 'idea' in his definition of significant form. In art the idea or significance is

> consciousness of purpose, the consciousness of a peculiar relation of sympathy with the man who made this thing in order to arouse precisely the sensations we experience. . . . We feel that he has expressed something which was latent in us all the time, but which we never realised, that he has revealed us to ourselves in revealing himself. And this recognition of purpose is, I believe, an essential part of the aesthetic judgement proper.[13]

This is the significant value of art, elsewhere referred to by Fry as purposeful order. Sensual beauty is not a prerequisite of a work of art, providing it has significant form.

In art unity is a major aspect of order. Unity is essential for the "restful contemplation of the work of art as a whole."[14] Without unity we must go outside the work of art before we can see it in its entirety and we therefore sacrifice the autonomy which Fry sees as essential to the work of art. In most paintings this unity comes from balancing the various forms around a central line, whereas in the literary work unity is sequential rather than simultaneous. In literature unity depends on the "forms being presented to us in such a sequence that each successive element is felt to have a fundamental and harmonious relation with that which preceded it."[15]

In order that he may arouse our emotions and not merely satisfy our desire for sensuous beauty and sensuous order and variety, the artist makes use of rhythm, mass, space, light and shade, colour and planes, which are the emotional factors of design. Fry believes that through the use of these various physical elements which are all elements of natural form it is made possible for the graphic arts to give us

> first of all order and variety in the sensuous plane, and then so to arrange the sensuous presentment of objects that the emotional elements are elicited with an order and appropriateness altogether beyond what Nature herself provides.[16]

It is the business of the artist to rearrange these elements of natural form in such a manner as to awake our aesthetic emotion which is, as Johnstone explains, "an emotion about the relations that are seen to exist between objects, persons and events in a work of art."[17] This arrangement of natural elements to achieve artistic form and order Fry calls transformations. It is not enough to copy nature, the artist must bring to his vision a certain form which includes pattern and rhythm which is lacking in nature. He does not turn his back on nature. From it he must build a universe which has its own significance and reality and which has about it its own sense of inevitability, that is, the feeling that "everything is in its appointed place, and not a colour could be changed or an object disturbed."[18]

Repeatedly Fry stresses the idea of an art which exists for itself and not for its usefulness. He insists that although we may find that any object can demand from us that we see it with the curious detachment of everyday life, the work of art has the added feature of significant form --"that added consciousness of purpose" which comes from the artist and forces us to realize that he created the work of art not for its usefulness but simply to be enjoyed. This, then, is Fry's idea of significant form and the chief element of aesthetic emotion. The test of the work of art lies, not in its elements of representation, but rather in the manner in which the artist expresses the emotional elements. Fry's idea of significant form is well expressed by Johnstone in the following:

> Creation begins with vision of a special and penetrating kind. The artist pierces beneath the trivial, obvious characteristics of his subject, beneath the surface appearance, to seize, perhaps, the profound, internal, plastic rhythms of a human head, or to come to an intimate intuitive understanding of animal life. He explains what he sees in forms clearly related to one another; and this is something more than a "realistic" account, given by the anxious delineation of wrinkles or fur, or what the man or animal "looks like".[19]

Where exactly does Virginia Woolf stand in all this? In her critical writings she shows that she feels as Fry does on many questions of aesthetics. Like Fry she believes that autonomy is very important to the work of art. She believes that the work of art should need nothing which stands outside itself to make it complete. It exists entirely on its own. Referring to the novels of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy in her essay, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown", she says:

> Sometimes I wonder if we are right to call them books at all. For they leave one with so strange a feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction. In order to complete them it seems necessary to do something --to join a society, or, more desperately, to write a cheque. That done, the restlessness is laid, the book finished; it can be put upon the shelf, and need never be read again. But with the work of other novelists it is different. Tristram Shandy or Pride and Prejudice is complete in itself; it is self-contained; it leaves one with no desire to do anything, except indeed to read the book again.[20]

It becomes obvious from that quotation that Virginia Woolf believes, like Fry, that pure art should be freed from the moral obligations of everyday life. The purpose of the novel is "not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire."[21] Pure art should not aim at reform, nor should it deliver messages. She too believed in art which served no useful purpose. The business of reform is not the business of the novelist, or more broadly the artist. Reform has its own place and must be taken on by someone other than the artist, as for instance the government, the politician. She accuses Mr. Wells of being a materialist who in his novels, "from sheer goodness of heart, [was] taking upon his shoulders the work that ought to have been discharged by Government officials."[22]

Virginia Woolf makes a statement reminiscent of Fry's statement regarding greater scope for observing in imaginative life as opposed to actual life. Virginia Woolf's statement is limited to human character, whereas Fry includes all aspects of life, but their claims are remarkably similar. She believes that

> In middle age and in old age the art is practiced mostly for its uses, and friendships and other adventures and experiments in the art of reading character are seldom made. But novelists differ from the rest of the world because they do not cease to be interested in character when they have learnt enough about it for practical purposes.[23]

Life Fry, too, Virginia Woolf believes that mere representation is not at all the business of pure art. Speaking censoriously of Mr. Bennett's manner of writing novels, she says:

> [He] would observe every detail with immense care. He would notice the advertisements; the pictures of Swanage and Portsmouth; the way in which the cushion bulged between the buttons; how Mrs. Brown wore a broach which had cost three-and-ten-three at Whiteworth's bazaar; and had mended both gloves --indeed the thumb of the left-hand glove had been replaced.[24]

Virginia Woolf deplores this unimaginative attention to unimportant detail. A further example of her dislike of unnecessary detail is found when, while speaking of the inspiration she feels in the presence of Mrs. Brown, she tells of her own inability to give artistic form to her vision:

> The incident had made a great impression on me. But how was I to transmit it to you? All I could do was to report as accurately as I could what was said, to describe in detail what was worn, to say, desparingly, that all sorts of scenes rushed into my mind.[25]

Yet again she deplores this practice when she speaks of some of the problems of contemporary novelists:

> The writer seems constrained . . . by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall to provide a plot, to provide . . . an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccably that if his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour.[26]

Mere representation is not enough for Virginia Woolf any more than it is for Roger Fry. Representation is only acceptable if it serves the artist's purpose of expressing "idea", because "Any method is right, every method is right, that expresses what we wish to express, if we are writers; that brings us closer to the novelist's intention if we are readers."[27]

Without using the word significance, Virginia Woolf makes mention of just such a quality as described by Fry as essential to the successful completion of a work of art. She refers to the quality by different names at different times --"life" at one time; "spirit" at another; and at other times "truth" and "reality". Whatever she calls it, it is recognizable as the quality which Fry calls the "idea" or "significance" of art. Speaking once more of Mr. Bennett's work, she says:

> Mr. Bennett is perhaps the worst culprit of the three, inasmuch as he is by far the best workman. He can make a book so well constructed and solid in its craftsmanship that it is difficult for the most exacting critics to see through what chink or crevice decay creep in. . . . And yet --if life should refuse to live there?[28]

Order is as important to Virginia Woolf's concept of art as it is to Roger Fry's. The artist must bring order and form to the chaos before him:

> It will be necessary for the writer of this exacting book to bring to bear upon his tumultuous and contradictory emotions the generalizing and simplyfying power of a strict and logical imagination. Tumult is vile; confusion is hateful; everything in a work of art must be mastered and ordered. . . . Instead of enumerating details he will mould blocks.[29]

From the foregone it can be clearly seen how closely in many aspects the aesthetic beliefs of Virginia Woolf echo those of Roger Fry. Order, form, autonomy in art, imaginative life, the aesthetic emotion --on all these subjects Virginia Woolf and Roger Fry have similar opinions as will be seen even more clearly when the novels of Virginia Woolf are discussed.

NOTES

[1] Roger Fry, "An Essay in Aesthetics", Vision and Design, p. 20.

[2] Roger Fry, p. 22.

[3] Roger Fry, p. 16.

[4] Roger Fry, p. 12.

[5] Roger Fry, p. 13.

[6] Roger Fry, p. 14.

[7] Roger Fry, p. 14.

[8] Roger Fry, p. 23.

[9] Johnstone, Bloomsbury, p. 150.

[10] Roger Fry, p. 24.

[11] Roger Fry, p. 19.

[12] Roger Fry, p. 19.

[13] Roger Fry, p. 20.

[14] Roger Fry, p. 20.

[15] Roger Fry, p. 22.

[16] Roger Fry, p. 24.

[17] Johnstone, p. 160.

[18] Johnstone, p. 175.

[19] Johnstone, p. 180.

[20] Virginia Woolf, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, p. 12.

[21] Virginia Woolf, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, p. 9.

[22] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction",

[23] Virginia Woolf, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, p. 5.

[24] Virginia Woolf, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, p. 13.

[25] Virginia Woolf, Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown, p. 17.

[26] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", pp. 10-11.

[27] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", pp. 12.

[28] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", p. 9.

[29] Virginia Woolf, "Narrow Bridge of Art", Collected Essays, Volume II, p. 228.

CHAPTER III

VIRGINIA WOOLF AND THREE POST-IMPRESSIONIST PAINTERS

In his opening address at the 1912 Post-Impressionist exhibition held in the Grafton Galleries, Roger Fry claims that:

> [The] new movement in art . . . was the more disconcerting in that it was no mere variation upon accepted themes but implied a reconsideration of the very purpose and aim as well as the methods of pictorial and plastic art. It was not surprising, therefore, that a public which had come to admire above everything in a picture the skill with which the artist produced illusion should have resented an art in which skill was completely subordinated to the direct expression of feeling.[1]

Here Fry refers to the work of such artists as Paul Cézanne, Vincent Van Gogh, and Paul Gauguin. Were we to remove the words "pictorial" and "plastic", however, Fry's statement might legitimately be applied to the novels of Virginia Woolf. As John Hawley Roberts points out, Virginia Woolf did "fling representation to the winds and along with it the established notion of plot."[2]

There are, of course, some differences between the theories of these three Post-Impressionist painters. There are bound to be such differences because, apart from all considerations of personality, this was no organized movement where the artists discussed theories and agreed to follow set rules or patterns. As John Rewald tells us in the Introduction to his work, Post-Impressionism From Van Gogh to Gauguin:

> At the height of the short period covered in the present volume the Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren exclaimed: "There is no longer any single school, there are scarcely any groups, and those few are constantly splitting. All these tendencies make me think of moving and kaleidoscopic geometric patterns, which clash one moment only to unite at another, which now fuse and then separate and fly apart a little later, but which all nevertheless revolve within the same circle, that of the new art." . . . The groups which assembled and dispersed with great fluidity were of no particular homogeneity, nor did they follow each other or exist simultaneously in clearly definable form. Even more important is the fact that some of the most remarkable figures of the time did not belong to any of the larger currents but went their way alone.[3]

Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin are three of the 'remarkable figures' who went their way alone. This excerpt from John Rewald's work is important because it stresses the absence of any consensus on the part of the Post-Impressionist artists, while at the same time it indicates that in spite of the absence of formal organization there was among the artists involved a clear overlap or echo of ideas. As Rewald points out, the term Post-Impressionist covers a multitude of different artists and art movements:

> The term "post-impressionism" is not a very precise one, though it is certainly a very convenient one. In a broad sense it covers the period from about 1886, when the impressionists held their last and incomplete exhibition at which the neo-impressionists appeared for the first time, until some twenty years later, when cubism was born.[4]

Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin did not, therefore belong to any organized movement. Rather, each artist felt a need for change from the conventional manner of painting. They could "see that a new era in art [was] preparing, [they] sensed it coming."[5] Each artist had his particular beliefs and preferences to contend with. For example, Gauguin felt much more inclined to paint from memory than either Cézanne or Van Gogh. There are, however, in spite of differences, sufficient similarities between these artists to place them securely within the realm of the movement now referred to as Post-Impressionism. The statements made by Virginia Woolf on theories of art often reflect those of these three Post-Impressionists, to an extent where it becomes highly conceivable that her theories are based somewhat on a knowledge of theirs. Vincent Van Gogh died in 1890, Paul Gauguin in 1903, and Paul Cézanne in 1906 --that is, years before Virginia Woolf made her literary début with a novel, The Voyage Out, published in 1915. The influence, if there is influence, is not direct, therefore, but started some years after the deaths of the three artists, perhaps with Fry's Post-Impressionist exhibition of 1910. The evidence of influence is not very readily perceived in Virginia Woolf's first publications, but grows as her friendship with Roger Fry grows. This encourages the speculation that any influence which the Post-Impressionist artists had on Virginia Woolf was received at second hand, with Fry being the mediator. It is perhaps impossible now to prove whether Virginia Woolf was influenced through Fry or by direct contact with the work of these three artists, and there will be no attempt to try. What can be proved is that there are distinct similarities between her theories and those of Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin. In this chapter we will explore some of the critical writings of these four artists in order to discover to what extent those of Virginia Woolf resemble those of the three painters.

CÉZANNE

Cézanne's theoretical statements are not formally presented and have for the most part to ~~be~~ deduced from his work, and from casual remarks found in his letters. He makes no attempt to arrange them formally because it is his belief that

> [painters must devote themselves] entirely to the study of nature and try to produce pictures which are an instruction. Talks on art are almost useless.[6]
>
> One says more and better things painting when facing the motif than when discussing purely speculative theories --in which, as often as not, one loses oneself.[7]

The artist, Cézanne feels, must find salvation in painting and not in theorising. He does not "want to be right in theory but in nature."[8] His statements on art are found chiefly, therefore, in brief excerpts from letters written to his son, friends, and fellow artists. Nevertheless, they are sufficient, when combined with a study of his work, to give a coherent picture of his theory. Many of Virginia Woolf's statements are particularly reminiscent of these cursory excerpts.

Cézanne feels that the artist is a special, rare person, since "Art only addresses itself to an excessively small number of individuals."[9] He believes, however, that in order to enhance this special gift, there are certain precedents which the artist must bear in mind. The first of these is the study of character. In one letter to his son he says:

> I must carry on. I simply must produce after nature. --Sketches, pictures, if I were to do any, would be merely constructions after [nature], based on method, sensations, and developments suggested by the model, but I always say the same thing.[10]

To observe character, by which he means nature generally, must be the first task of the artist, who "must scorn all judgement that is not based on an intelligent observation of character."[11] He is confident that "All things, particularly in art, are theory developed and applied in contact with nature."[12] He says to his friend, Charles Camion, "we must hasten out and by contact with nature revive in us the instincts and sensations that dwell within us."[13] Inspiration, he feels, comes from facing the model squarely. This is a pre-requisite for the artist to work in any way effectively. Nothing else will do. The greatest artists of the past could have done little else. He tells his friend and fellow artist, Bernard, that any search for the correct way

> will lead you surely to the recognition in front of nature, of what your means of expression are; and the day you will have found them, be convinced that you will find also without effort and in front of nature, the means employed by the four or five great ones of Venice.[14]

Cézanne feels that the artist should, and does inevitably, if he is to rise above the ordinary, impose his particular temperament upon his work. He urges, "let us strive to express ourselves according to our personal temperaments."[15] He adds:

> Now the theme to develop is that --whatever our temperament or power in the presence of nature may be-- we must render the image of what we see, forgetting everything that existed before us. Which, I believe, must permit the artist to give his entire personality whether great or small.[16]
>
> If the official Salons remain so inferior it is because they only employ more or less widely known methods of production. It would be better to bring more personal feeling, observation and character.[17]

It has by now become clear that Cézanne places emphasis on the study of nature in the development of the artist. One must not assume, however, that he advocates a slavish imitation. Indeed, this is the exact opposite of his belief. Descriptive imitation is certainly not a part of his teaching. Fry puts it rather well when he states that the Post-Impressionist artists

> do not seek to give what can after all, be but a pale reflex of actual appearance, but to arouse the conviction of a new and definite reality. They do not seek to imitate form but to create form; not to imitate life but to find an equivalent for life.[18]

Cézanne and the rest of the Post-Impressionists are searching for something other than a recognizable copy of life. These artists are in search of "logical development", as Cézanne calls it, and for unity of design, both of which are outside of nature and not to be found in photographic representation. Cézanne advises the artist to "Get to the heart of what is before you and continue to express yourself as logically as possible."[19] He feels that, although

> One is neither too scrupulous nor too sincere nor too submissive to nature . . . one is more or less master of one's model, and above all, of the means of expression.[20]

The artist, not the model, not nature, is the master. As Fry tells us, Cézanne and his contemporaries

> aim to make images which because of the clearness of their logical structure, and by their close knit unity and texture, appeal to our disinterested and contemplative imagination with something of the same vividness as the things of actual life appeal to our practical activities.[21]

Cézanne believes, as Fry and Virginia Woolf after him come to do, that the artist needs time and reflection in order to select his 'moments' from life: "Time and reflection . . . modify little by little our vision, and at last comprehension comes to us."[22]

Cézanne speaks strongly on the question of technique. Technique must not overshadow the artist's vision. So far as it is instrumental in clarifying the artist's vision it is useful and for no other reason:

> I believe in the logical development of everything we see and feel through the study of nature and turn my attention to technical questions later; for technical questions are for us only the means of making the public feel what we feel ourselves and of making ourselves understood. The great masters whom we admire can have done nothing else.[23]

Cézanne sees the limitations of the public for whom he paints. He realizes that attention to photographic representation in conventional painting has led the public to develop certain preconceived ideas of what a picture should be; ideas which have little to do with pure aesthetic feeling. He regrets this public lack and the necessity it causes for the artist to over-emphasize technique in order to ensure public attention:

> It is really a pity that art things are not better appreciated and that to attract the public an enhancement is necessary which does not belong exclusively to art.[24]

Cézanne never succumbs to public pressure. He is determined not to prostitute himself to the whims of a society led by convention. He insists that the artist need not add the artificial polish and gloss to his picture unless it somehow helps to express his artistic 'idea'. Perfection and skill in painting are important only in so far as they help to do so:

> I have still got to work, not so as to be able to add the final polish, which is for the admiration of imbeciles. And the thing that is commonly so much appreciated is merely the reality of the handwork and renders all work resulting from it inartistic and common. I must strive after perfection only for the pleasure of giving added truth and learning. And believe me, the hour always comes when one makes an impression and one has admirers far more fervent and convinced than those who are only flattered by the empty appearances.[25]

The manner in which Cézanne regards character, temperament, photographic representation and technique is in keeping with the Post-Impressionists' departure from convention. He advises that the artist must free himself from those who came before him:

> Whoever the master is whom you prefer this must only be a directive for you. Otherwise you will never be anything but an imitator. With any feeling for nature whatever, and some fortunate gifts —and you have some— you should be able to

> dissociate yourself; advice, the methods of another must not make you change your own manner of feeling.[26]

> The Louvre is a book in which we learn to read. We must not, however, be satisfied with retaining the beautiful formulas of our illustrious predecessors. Let us go forth to study beautiful nature, let us try to free our minds from them.[27]

As Fry points out, Cézanne's "attitude to conventional art was a strange mixture of admiration at its skill and an overwhelming horror of its emptiness --of its so 'horrible resemblance'."[28] Cézanne admits that it is natural for the artist, in periods of uncertainty, to turn to the old masters:

> [When] we do not succeed in mastering ourselves in possessing ourselves . . . we turn towards the admirable works that have been handed down to us throughout the ages, where we find comfort, a support such as a plank is for the bather.[29]

However, the artist must strive to overcome this natural instinct to turn to safety and security. He must venture out in order to be original. The old masters need not be forgotten but should serve only as a guide and not as the final arbiter. Cézanne tells his friend, Charles Camion:

> I hope that the artistic influence that this master [Monet] cannot fail to have on his more or less immediate surroundings will be felt in accordance only with the strictly necessary weight that it can and must have on an artist young and well disposed towards work. Couture used to say to his pupils: "Keep good company, that is: Go to the Louvre. But after having seen the great masters who repose there, we must hasten out and by contact with nature revive in us the instincts and sensations of art that dwell within us."[30]

The old masters must serve only as a point of departure for the young. Repeatedly Cézanne gives the same advice:

> Since you are now in Paris and the masters of the Louvre are attracting you, make, if you feel like it, some studies after the great decorative masters Veronese and Rubens, just as you would do after nature —a thing I was only able to do incompletely myself. But you do well to study above all after nature.[31]

His criticism of Émile Bernard is based on this theory. He feels that Bernard

> is an intellectual crushed by the memory of the museums, but who does not look at nature enough, and that is the great thing, to make oneself free of the school and indeed of all schools. So—that Pissarro was not mistaken, though he went a little too far, when he said that all the necropoles of art should be burned.[32]

The old masters must take their proper place as must the new painters. Modern painters should seek, not to repeat the past, but to create a pattern of continuance in the unbreakable line of art history:

> To my mind one should not substitute oneself for the past, one has merely to add a new link. With the temperament of a painter and an ideal of art, that is to say a conception of nature, sufficient powers of expression would have been necessary to be intelligible for man and to occupy a suitable position in the history of art.[33]

Again Cézanne points to Émile Bernard as an example of an artist who permits his knowledge of the old masters to lead him away from a knowledge and development of his own capabilities. Cézanne claims that although Émile Bernard is "one of the most distinguished aesthetes . . . the good man simply turns his back in practice on what he expounds in his writings":[34]

> His drawings are merely old-fashioned rubbish which result from his dreams of art, based not on the emotion of nature but on what he has been able to see in the museums, and more still

> on a philosophic mind which comes from the too great knowledge he has of the masters he admires.[35]

VAN GOGH

As it is to Cézanne, the study of nature is very important to Van Gogh. He claims that, "in the matter of form I am too afraid of departing from the possible and the true."[36] He uses nature as his guide because he finds that he "cannot work without a model."[37] Because he considers it an important factor in the life of the artist, he gets "well acquainted with nature", as he says himself. Repeatedly he stresses the need to refer to the model: "We must return to nature in spite of our education and our work in a world of convention."[38]

Van Gogh feels, like Cézanne, that the artist must manipulate nature; use it to do his own bidding, rather than reproduce a dull copy of it. In spite of his claim that he cannot work without a model, Van Gogh is not a slave to nature:

> I won't say that I don't turn my back on nature ruthlessly in order to turn a study into a picture, arranging the colours, enlarging and simplyfying . . . I exaggerate, sometimes I make changes in the motif.[39]

Van Gogh's determination to paint objects as they are and not as the public wants them to be does not make him any more favourably disposed towards photographic representation than is Cézanne. In the first place, he feels, the artist must be selective of his material. He does not simply pick at random a particular section of nature and reproduce it as nearly as possible. In order to project his vision for the public to share, he must choose carefully from all that he sees before him; in most cases choosing that portion of nature which is hidden from the practical eyes of the public in its daily existence. Van Gogh is aware of this and mentions in a letter to his brother Theo, that

> All winter long I have had the threads of this tissue in my hands, and have searched for the ultimate pattern; and though it has become a tissue of rough, coarse aspect, nevertheless the threads have been chosen carefully and according to certain rules.[40]

The finished picture is not a photographic representation of nature. Van Gogh does not "invent the whole"[41] however, for after all it is "all ready in nature, only it must be disentangled."[42] He feels that the artist should expose himself to nature, but having done this, he must take his findings, shape them and then offer the public his vision, a viable "equivalent for life" as Fry calls it, "a new and definite reality," presented in such a manner that it endures.

According to Van Gogh the artist should not aim at the immediate, but at the infinite. He claims that "one works with more serenity"

> if what one is doing looks out upon the infinite, and if one sees that one's work has its raison d'etre and continuance in the future.[43]

This is what he means too when he says, "I am not at all anxious for everyone to like ["The Potato Eaters"] or admire it at once."[44]

Imagination is another concern of Van Gogh. Like Cezanne he believes in the importance of nature. He feels that having selected from nature the artist should bring imagination to bear in the attempt to project his vision. Van Gogh indicates, as Fry is later to do, that it is through the imagination that the artist gets a complete picture of life.

> The imagination is certainly a faculty which we must develop, one which alone can lead us to the creation of a more exalting and consoling nature than the single brief glance at reality --which in our sight is ever changing, passing like a flash of lightening--can let us perceive.[45]

About technique Van Gogh displays an unconcern reminiscent of Cézanne:

> My brush stroke has no system at all. I hit the canvas with irregular touches of the brush, which I leave as they are. Patches of thickly laid-on colour, spots of canvas left uncovered, here and there portions that are left absolutely unfinished, repetitions, savageries; in short, I am inclined to think that the result is so disquieting and irritating as to be a godsend to those people who have fixed preconceived ideas about technique.[46]

Van Gogh does not paint by any established rules because "Nature . . . [is] so extraordinarily beautiful . . . I cannot paint it as beautiful as that, but it absorbs me so much that I let myself go, never thinking of a single rule."[47]

Van Gogh, as a Post-Impressionist, is predictable in his rejection of convention. He prefers to paint objects as they are rather than as they have conventionally been painted. In a discussion of his painting, "The Potato Eaters", he admits that there is a certain lack of conventional polish about it. He realizes that this might not appeal to the general public, used as they are to seeing peasants presented in their Sunday-best. He prefers, however, to paint the peasants as they truly are, or as they appear to him, and not as the public prefers to see them. Dressed in his Sunday-best, the peasant displays only a small and unimportant aspect of his entire character. This is an aspect which is assumed and tends to cover over the real character. This will not do for Van Gogh. He feels that

> he who prefers to see the peasants in their Sunday-best may do as he likes. I personally am convinced I get better results by painting them in their roughness than by giving them a conventional charm.
>
> I think a peasant girl is more beautiful than a lady, in her dusty, patched blue skirt and bodice, which get the most delicate hues from weather, wind, and sun. But if she puts on a lady's dress, she loses her peculiar charm. A peasant is more real in his fustian clothes in the fields than when he goes to church on Sunday in a kind of dress coat.
>
> In the same way it would be wrong, I think, to give a peasant picture a certain conventional smoothness.[48]

GAUGUIN

Like Cézanne and Van Gogh, Gauguin insists that the artist must not be a slave to technique:

> Do you ". . . have a technique?" they will demand.
>
> No, I have not. Or rather I do have one, but it is very fugitive, very flexible, according to my disposition when I arise in the morning; a technique which I apply in my own manner to express my own thought without any concern for the truth of the common, exterior aspects of Nature.[49]

Gauguin feels that the artist's medium should be subservient to the artist and not the opposite. For him there are no convenient, hard and fast rules to be followed by all artists. The only requirement is that the artist's method permits him to say exactly what he wants to say. Impulse rather than the routine application of conventional forms of technique is advocated, especially if it will permit the artist to present his vision in an original fashion:

> I consider Impressionism as a completely new quest which must necessarily separate itself from everything mechanical like photography, etc. That is why I will get as far away as possible from that which gives the illusion of a thing. . . .[50]

Gauguin aims not at an attempt to create a perfect, but superficial illusion of reality, but a deeper truth which is not possible if the artist follows conventional rules that lead to photographic representation. His discussion on the use of shadow is proof of his determination to maintain a certain freedom. He tells a fellow artist that although he is not himself partial to shadow in his paintings, this does not preclude its effective use by another artist. It is entirely up to the individual artist:

> [P]ut in the shadows if you consider them useful, or don't put them in. It's all the same thing, if you consider yourself not a slave to shadow; it is, as it were, the shadow which is at your service.[51]

The important thing is that the artist should not be ruled by technique. The pursuit of skill ought not to be his object, but the pursuit of 'idea' or inner truth. Gauguin sees the artist as the manipulator. Gauguin considered the painting "Whence Do

We Come? Where Are We? Where Are We Going?" painted in 1898 to be his masterpiece. In this painting technique and skill have taken a subordinate place. Gauguin recognizes this and feels that this is perhaps one of the reasons why the painting is superior. He says in a letter to Daniel de Monfried:

> They will say that it is careless . . . not finished. It is true that one is not a good judge of one's own work; however, I believe that this canvas not only surpasses all the preceding ones, but also that I will never do anything better or even similar to it. Before dying I put into it all my energy, such a painful passion under terrible circumstances, and a vision so clear without corrections, that the haste disappears and the life surges up. It does not smell of the model, of professional techniques and so-called rules --from all of which I always did free myself. . . .[52]

In later years Virginia Woolf was to make a statement which echoes this in all of its essentials, as will be seen later in the chapter when we study her critical statements.

Gauguin believes that the artist must flout convention and let nature be his guide. Originality and the projection of the artist's inspired vision cannot be taught, as Gauguin points out:

> During the last hundred years large amounts have been spent for the propagation of drawing and the number of painters is increasing, yet no real progress has been made. Who are the painters we admire at the present? All those who reproved the schools, all those who drew their science from the personal observation of nature.[53]

He feels that having studied nature, however, the artist should store the rudiments of his vision away and reproduce it only from memory. In this manner the artist may embue his work with the secrets of his particular vision:

> Some advice: do not paint too much after nature. Art is an abstraction; derive this abstraction from nature while dreaming before it, and think more of the creation which will result than of nature. Creating like our Divine Master is the only way of rising toward God.[54]

> The task of whoever paints is not at all like that of a mason's who, compass in hand, builds a house after a plan furnished by an architect. It is well for young people to have a model so long as they draw a curtain over it while they paint.
>
> It is better to paint from memory. Thus your work will be your own; your sensation, your intelligence and your soul will then survive the scrutiny of the ameteur. He goes to his stable if he wishes to count the hairs of his donkey and to determine the place of each of them.[55]

Gauguin complains that "The Impressionists study colour exclusively insofar as the decorative effect, but without freedom, retaining the shackles of verisimilitude. For them the dream landscape, created from different entities, does not exist."[56] He feels this is the result of standing too close to the model without a break for the imaginative life to take over. This omission can lead to a superficial interpretation. This is what Gauguin implies when he accuses the Impressionists of being materialists:

> They heed only the eye and neglect the mysterious centers of thought, so falling into merely scientific reasoning. . . . The art of yesterday has plumbed the depths, it has produced masterpieces and will continue to do so. Meanwhile, the officials of today are aboard a boat that is vacillating, badly constructed and incomplete. . . . When they speak of their art, what is it? A purely superficial art, full of affectations and purely material.[57]

COLOUR

Various critics, including Roger Fry, have spoken of the 'explosion of colour' which characterises the work of many of the Post-Impressionists. The three artists who are here under discussion have themselves spoken about the importance of colour in the presentation of their visions. It seems fitting, therefore, that something should be said about colour at this point. We deal with it separately, almost parenthetically, because it is perhaps the one important aspect of Post-Impressionist painting with which Virginia Woolf does not concern herself in her critical writings. There is a simple enough explanation for this, of course. Virginia Woolf is a writer and not a painter. Therefore, colour as a means of expression plays no very significant role in her work, as it inevitably does in the work of a painter. In her novels, To the Lighthouse in particular, Virginia Woolf shows her awareness of the importance of colour to the Post-Impressionists, but because it has no importance for her as a writer she sees no need to discuss it in her critical writings.

The three Post-Impressionists studied here regard colour as an important stimulus in the arousal of aesthetic emotions. They depend on colour as much as they depend on form to transmit the aesthetic emotion to the beholder. To Cézanne the importance of colour is tied in with the important role which nature as model plays in his work. To him colour is an unalterable part of nature. The intense colour of his paintings is meant to have a profound effect on the senses of his audience. Cézanne admits that although with time he becomes "more clear-sighted in front of nature", he cannot hope to compete with the amazing colours to be found in nature, but he struggles continually to achieve the same:

> I cannot attain the intensity that is unfolded before my senses. I have not the magnificent richness of colouring that animates nature.[58]

From this quotation it becomes clear that Cézanne sees colour almost in the light of a life-giving force, having the power to 'animate' nature. That he regards colour as an element which is just as important as line in the creation of aesthetic sensation becomes obvious when he insists that "[p]ainting by means of drawing and colour, gives concrete shape to sensations and perceptions."[59] He continues:

> Nature for us men is more depth than surface whence the need of introducing into our light vibrations, represented by reds and yellows, a sufficient amount of blue to give the impression of air.[60]

Like Cézanne, Van Gogh sees the important connection between nature and colour. In his case, however, he went so far as to suggest that the artists of the future would venture further and further south in search of the rich, bold colours of tropical vegetation:

> [B]y intensifying all the colours one arrives once again at quietude and harmony. There occurs in nature something similar to what happens in Wagner's music, which, though played by a big orchestra, is nonetheless intimate. Only when making a choice one prefers sunny and colourful effects, and there is nothing that prevents me from thinking that in the future many painters will go and work in

> tropical countries. You will be able to get an idea of the revolution in painting when you think, for instance, of the brightly coloured Japanese pictures that one sees everywhere, landscapes and figures.[61]

Part of Van Gogh's technique is to place his so-called intensified colours side by side. He places sharp blues, greens yellows and purples side by side, startling to the eye which has grown used to the conventional use of colour:

> Here is a sketch, the entrance to a Provençal orchard with its yellow fences, its enclosure of black cypresses . . . its characteristic vegetables of varying greens: yellow lettuces, onions, garlic, emerald leeks.
>
> Later I fill in the spaces which are bounded by contours . . . with tones which are also simplified, by which I mean that all that is going to be soil will share the same violet-like tone, and the whole sky will have a blue tint, that the green vegetation will be either green-blue or green-yellow, purposely exaggerating the yellows and blues in this case.[62]

From this quotation it can be clearly seen that even as Van Gogh juxtaposes bold colours for the purpose of creating aesthetic emotion in the onlooker, he aims at the simplification of colour. His use of black and white is unconventional; for he often uses them unmixed "just as the colour merchant sells them."[63] He strives for simplified colour not unlike certain Japanese artists. Like the Japanese, too, he tries to stay away from reflected colour:

> When in a green park with pink paths I see a gentleman dressed in black and a justice of the peace by trade. . . .
>
> Over him and a park a sky of a simple cobalt. . . . Then why not paint the said *zouge de paix* with ordinary bone black and the Intransigeant with simple, quite raw white? For the Japanese artist ignores reflected colours, and puts the

> flat tones side by side, with characteristic lines marking off the movements and the forms.[63]

Van Gogh exaggerates the colours of nature in order to create sensation. He uses colour in such a way as to express emotion. For example, he explains one of his attempts to express the emotion love, through the use of colour:

> I should like to paint the portrait of an artist friend, a man who dreams great dreams, who works as the nightingale sings, because it is his nature. He'll be a blond man. I want to put my appreciation, the love I have for him, into the picture. So I paint him as he is, as faithfully as I can, to begin with.
>
> But the picture is not yet finished. To finish it I am now going to be the arbitrary colourist. I exaggerate the fairness of the hair, I even get to orange tones, chromes and pale citron-yellow.
>
> Behind the head, instead of painting the ordinary wall of the mean room, I paint infinity, a plain background of the richest, intensest blue that I can contrive, and by this simple combination of the bright head against the rich blue background, I get a mysterious effect, like a star in the depths of an azure sky.[64]

He tries, as he tells us himself, "to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green"[65] usually placed side by side. He admires not only the contrast of red and green, but of blue and orange, of sulphur and lilac, of persian blue and chrome yellow. His description of one of his paintings, "The Night Cafe", shows clearly his use of contrasting colours to express intense emotion:

> I have tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green.
>
> The room is blood red and dark yellow with a green billiard table in the middle; there are four citron-yellow lamps with a glow of orange and green. Everywhere there is a clash and contrast

> of the most disparate reds and greens in the figures of little sleeping hooligans, in the empty, dreary room, in violet and blue. The blood-red and the yellow-green of the billiard table, for instance, contrast with the soft tender Louis XV green of the counter, on which there is a pink nosegay. The white coat of the landlord, awake in a corner of that furnace, turns citron-yellow, or luminous green.[66]

> In my picture of the "Night Cafe" I have tried to express the idea that the cafe is a place where one can ruin oneself, go mad or commit a crime. So I have tried to express, as it were, the powers of darkness in a low public house, by soft Louis XV green and malachite, contrasting with yellow-green and harsh blue-greens, and all this in an atmosphere like a devil's furnace, of pale sulphur.[67]

More even than Van Gogh, Gauguin turns to the Japanese for instruction in the use of colour. It is their work which he bears in mind in making his choice to repudiate shadow:

> Look at the Japanese, who certainly draw admirably, and you will see life in the outdoors and sunlight without shadows, using colour only as a combination of tones . . . giving the impression of warmth, etc.[68]

Like Cézanne and Van Gogh, Gauguin uses colour to create sensations in his audience. Intense colour he feels creates intense emotions. Gauguin makes his sentiments clear about colour and his conception of its use and value when he describes one of his paintings, "Manao Tupapau" or "The Spirit of the Dead Keeps Watch", painted in 1892. In the following excerpt Gauguin explains exactly what he sets out to do with colour:

> The bark cloth sheet must be yellow, because in this colour it arouses something unexpected for the spectator, and because it suggests lamplight. This, however, prevents me from making an actual effect of a lamp. I need a background of terror; purple is clearly

> indicated. And now the musical part of the picture is laid out.[69]

Gauguin clearly connects the sensations aroused by music with those aroused by colour in a painting. This can be seen even more clearly from his claim that "One does not use colour to draw but always to give the musical sensations which flow from itself, from its own nature, from its mysterious and enigmatic interior force."[70] It will be remembered that Van Gogh too makes this comparison when he sees something of the feeling aroused by Wagner's music in the intense colours of nature. This is of course what Roger Fry and Virginia Woolf proceeded to label as aesthetic emotion; an emotion which in engendered by the thing itself, the object of art, and has nothing to do with anything which comes from outside. The Post-Impressionist painters expected their bold use of unmixed colour to have this effect on spectators. As Gauguin tells us,

> Colour, being itself enigmatic in the sensations which it gives us, can logically be employed only enigmatically. One does not use colour to draw but always to give the musical sensations which flow from itself, from its own nature, from its mysterious and enigmatic interior force.[71]

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Virginia Woolf's belief in the special qualities of the artist are reminiscent of Cézanne. While she does not deny that "Mrs. Brown" is there for everyone to see —"she is just as visible to you who remain silent as to us who tell stories about her"—[72] she claims that "Few catch the phantom; but most have to be content with a scrap of her dress or a wisp of her hair."[73] She too believes that the artist's special qualities can be built upon through the observation of certain basic precedents, for instance, character. Like Cézanne she stresses the importance of character to the artist:

> I believe that all novels . . . deal with character, and it is to express character --not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire that the form of the novel . . . has been evolved.[74]

Here Virginia Woolf speaks simply of human nature. It is clear, however, that the two artists, Virginia Woolf and Cézanne, want to make the same point, which is, that the artist must not be sidetracked from his study of nature --human or otherwise. Like the three artists studied above, Virginia Woolf realizes the importance of nature to the artist. She warns that "to retire to one's study in fear of life is . . . fatal.[75]

Virginia Woolf's complaint about the Edwardian writers is that they looked everywhere else but at the model, human nature. Her frequently mentioned work, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" is entirely devoted to the study of this problem. The Edwardians, she says, looked

> very powerfully . . . out of the window; at factories, at Utopias, even at the decoration and upholstery of the carriage; but never at her, never at life, never at human nature.[76]

Virginia Woolf's impassioned plea "never to desert Mrs. Brown" who is to her the symbol of human nature, "the embodiment of life itself," is curiously reminiscent of Cézanne's many statements about nature, his model.

Most novelists, says Virginia Woolf, are led on by a phantom. They spend their lives in pursuit of this will-o'-the wisp. "The study of character becomes to them an absorbing pursuit; to impart character an obsession."[77] Contact with this will-o'-the wisp figure who turns out to be a real, tangible person, in the shape of Mrs. Brown if you wish, raises in them an impulse which "urges them so powerfully every now and then to embody their view in writing."[78] This will-o'-the wisp figure affords the inspiration which Cézanne finds in nature.

Virginia Woolf feels that, having looked at the model --nature, in this case Mrs. Brown-- the artist is at liberty to paint her as he sees fit. His vision, whatever it is, is valid. She claims that there is

> the writer's temperament to be considered. You see one thing in character, and I another. You see it means this and I that. And when it comes to writing each makes a further selection on principles of his own. Thus Mrs. Brown can be treated in an infinite variety of ways.[79]

The artist's temperament plays a great part, as Cézanne tells us, in ensuring originality and leading him away from conventionality.

Like the three painters before her, Virginia Woolf emphasises that artists must beware of nature's duplicity:

> Stridently, clamorously, life is forever pleading that she is the proper end of fiction and that the more he sees of her and catches of her the better his book will be. She does not add, however, that she is grossly impure; that the side she flaunts uppermost is often for the novelist of no value whatever.[80]

Virginia Woolf does not mean to deny that life is "the proper end of fiction." She knows that it is. She wishes rather to say that the artist must be selective, that he must learn to use nature and not let himself be used by it. She insists that although all nature stands before the artist, since he cannot possible represent it all, he must be selective. He must extract from nature only those portions needed to make his vision clear to the public. This careful selection from nature allows the artist to take a step away from photographic representation. Virginia Woolf describes the process of selection:

> Taste, sound, movement, a few words here, a gesture there, a man coming in, a woman going out, even the motor that passes in the street beggar that shuffles along the pavement, and all reds and blues and lights and shades of a scene claim his attention and raise his curiosity.
>
> [But] drastic is the process of selection.[81]

Like the three artists before her Virginia Woolf claims that time and reflection are needed in order for the artist to modify his vision and restrain himself from a slavish mimicy of nature:

> The novelist is terribly exposed to life. . . . He can no more cease to receive impressions than a fish in mid-ocean can cease to let water rush through his gills.
>
> But . . . all writers whose books survive have known how to master it and make it serve their purpose. They have finished the wine and paid the bill and gone off, alone, into some solitary room where, with toil and pause, in agony . . . with struggle and rush . . . tumultuously . . . they have mastered their perceptions, hardened them, and changed them into the fabrics of their art.[82]

Having 'modified' and 'changed' his initial perceptions of nature, the artist gives to us a work which is more than a clever example of photographic representation. In spite of her insistence that the artist must get to know his model intimately, Virginia Woolf is no more an artist of imitation than are the three artists previously discussed. She sees the model as a source of inspiration, a form of guidance. The model --nature-- is a means of evoking the artist's special gifts; and its study the first step in the attempt to share his vision with the public.

Virginia Woolf criticises Bennett to the effect that "if his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coat in the fashion of the hour",[83] but curiously lacking in life. This, Virginia Woolf feels, can be avoided if the artist works from memory, rather than with an eye always fixed on the model. Like Gauguin, Virginia Woolf feels that the artist, having studied nature, should retire to a room of his own to contemplate it and to bring shape to his extraction:

> He must expose himself to life; he must risk the danger of being led away and tricked by her deceitfulness; he must seize her treasure from her and let her trash run to waste. But at a certain moment he must leave the company and withdraw alone, to that mysterious room where his body is hardened and fashioned into permanence.[84]
>
> So drastic is the process of selection that in its final state we can often find no trace of the actual scene upon which the chapter was based. . . . There emerges from the mist something stark, something formidable and enduring, the bone and substance upon which our rush of indiscriminating emotion was founded.[85]

Like the Post-Impressionist artists, too, Virginia Woolf recognizes the importance of imagination. She feels that the imagination must come into play after the artist has studied the model, in order that he might delve beneath the readily apparent surface:

> We have been letting ourselves bask in appearances. All this representation of the movement of life has sapped our imaginative power. We have sat receptive and watched, with our eyes rather than with our minds. How they dressed, what they ate, the slang they used --we know all that; but not what they are.[86]

Fry says that the Post-Impressionist artists

> do not seek to give what can after all, be but a pale reflex of actual appearance, but to arouse the conviction of a new and definite reality. They do not seek to imitate form but to create form; not to imitate life but to find an equivalent for life.[87]

This applies as much to Virginia Woolf as it does to the Post-Impressionists.

Virginia Woolf is very concerned with the technical aspects of her work. One has only to read a novel of hers in order to see this. However, she realizes that where the artist places too much emphasis on technique rather than on his vision, his work is bound to suffer. Then it is that technique becomes "an obstacle and an impediment."[88] She criticizes this aspect of the work of many of her contemporaries:

> The literary convention of the time is so artificial . . . that naturally, the feeble are tempted to outrage, and the strong are led to destroy the very foundations and rules of literary society. Signs of this are everywhere apparent. Grammar is violated, syntax disintegrated. . . . The effort and strain of writing against the grain and current of the times is visible.[89]

Virginia Woolf is appalled by those writers who pay far more attention to technique than to their vision. This sentiment is heard again in her cry "what a waste of energy" when she compares a writer of a previous age with a contemporary, Lytton-Strachey. She says of the older writer, "all his strength went straight into his work; none was used for purposes of concealment or of conversion."[90] This is an important aspect of the work of the Post-Impressionists, for whom "skill in a picture was completely subordinated to the direct expression of feeling."[91]

Virginia Woolf criticises the Edwardians because they use skill to hide a vast emptiness in their work. She says of them, "they spend immense skill and immense industry making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring":[92]

> [Mr. Bennett] is perhaps the worst culprit of the three, in as much as he is by far the best workman. He can make a book so well constructed and solid in its craftsmanship that it is difficult for the most exacting of critics to see through what chink or crevice decay can creep in. There is not so much as a draught between the frames of the windows, or a crack in the boards. And yet --if life should refuse to live there?[93]

Virginia Woolf seems to echo Van Gogh when she insists that the artist must aim for more than capturing the present. She ridicules novelists who try desperately to capture minute details without in any way attempting to bring to their work a deeper meaning which will last beyond the immediate:

> The novelist, then, who is a slave to life and concocts his books out of the froth of the moment is doing something difficult, something which pleases, something which, if you have a mind that way, may even instruct. But his work passes as the year 1921 passes, as fox-trots

> pass, and in three years' time looks as dowdy
> and dull as any fashion which has served its
> turn and gone its way.[94]

Like the three Post-Impressionist artists who came before her, Virginia Woolf believes that it is important for the artist to sever his ties with convention. The artist who slavishly follows convention neglects that quality which she feels it is his duty to capture —"whether we call it life or spirit or reality."[95] Furthermore, he fails to complete the business of artist, which is "making the public feel what we the artists ourselves feel."[96] All is lost when "we go on perseveringly, conscientiously, constructing our two and thirty chapters after a design which more and more ceases to resemble the vision in our minds."[97]

Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Virginia Woolf, it should by now be clear, have much in common with each other. They have similar concerns. They discuss similar topics, as for example, convention, nature, imitation and photographic representation. Furthermore, the conclusions which Virginia Woolf reaches on such topics greatly resemble those reached by the Post-Impressionists before her.

NOTES

[1] Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists", in _Transformations_, p. 156.

[2] John Hawley Roberts, "Vision & Design", in _Publications of the Modern Language Association of America_, p. 836.

[3] John Rewald, "Introduction" to _Post-Impressionism from Van Gogh to Gauguin_, p. iv.

[4] John Rewald, p. vi.

[5] Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists", p. 156.

[6] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_ , pp. 236-237.

[7] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 218.

[8] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 239.

[9] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 235.

[10] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 271.

[11] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 235.

[12] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 230

[13] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 228.

[14] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 218.

[15] _Paul Cézanne: Letters_, p. 250.

[16] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 251.

[17] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 250.

[18] Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists", p. 157.

[19] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 237.

[20] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 237.

[21] Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists", p. 156.

[22] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 250.

[23] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 266.

[24] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 116.

[25] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 99.

[26] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, pp. 241-242.

[27] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 250.

[28] Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists", p. 156.

[29] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 230.

[30] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 230.

[31] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 220.

[32] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 268.

[33] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 248.

[34] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 264.

[35] *Paul Cezanne: Letters*, p. 264.

[36] *The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh*, Vol. III, p. 518.

[37] The Complete Letters of Vincent Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 518.

[38] Van Gogh, Vol. III. p. 518.

[39] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 518.

[40] Van Gogh, Vol. II, p. 370.

[41] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 518.

[42] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 518.

[43] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 538.

[44] Van Gogh, Vol. II, p. 370.

[45] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 478.

[46] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 478.

[47] Van Gogh, Vol. II. p. 370.

[48] Van Gogh, Vol II, p. 370.

[49] Theories of Modern Art, ed. Herschel B. Chip, p. 65.

[50] Chipp, p. 60.

[51] Chipp, p. 60.

[52] Chipp, pp. 71-72.

[53] Chipp, p. 64.

[54] Chipp, p. 60.

[55] Chipp, p. 65.

[56] Chipp, p. 65.

[57] Chipp, p. 65.

[58] Paul Cezanne: Letters, p. 262.

[59] Paul Cezanne: Letters, p. 237.

[60] Paul Cezanne: Letters, p. 230.

[61] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 431.

[62] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 478,

[63] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 490.

[64] Chipp, pp. 34-35.

[65] Chipp, p. 36.

[66] Chipp, pp. 36-37.

[67] Chipp, p. 37

[68] Chipp, p. 60.

[69] Chipp, p. 68.

[70] Chipp, p. 66.

[71] Chipp, p. 66.

[72] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 23.

[73] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 3.

[74] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 9.

[75] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist", in Granite and Rainbow, p. 47.

[76] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 16.

[77] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 6.

[78] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 6.

[79] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 6.

[80] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist", p. 47.

[81] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist", p. 41.

[82] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist:, p. 41.

[83] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", *Collected Essays*, Vol. II, p. 11.

[84] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist", p. 47.

[85] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist", p. 41-42.

[86] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist", p. 44.

[87] Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists", p. 157.

[88] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 21.

[89] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", pp. 21-22.

[90] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett & Mrs. Brown", p. 22.

[91] Roger Fry, "The French Post-Impressionists", p. 156.

[92] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", p. 11.

[93] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", p. 9.

[94] Virginia Woolf, "Life and the Novelist", pp. 46-47.

[95] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", p. 11.

[96] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", p. 12.

[97] Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction", p. 12.

CHAPTER IV

THE NOVELS

In the previous chapters the emphasis was placed on the examination of Virginia Woolf's critical writings. The object was to determine what her aesthetic views were; to determine, moreover, whether her views, consciously or unconsciously, reflected those of the Post-Impressionist artists, in particular Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin; to see too if they echoed the sentiments of artist and art critic, Roger Fry. Roger Fry was a great admirer of the Post-Impressionists. He was Virginia Woolf's close friend and it was through him that she was most likely to have learnt of these artists, perhaps during "those discussions upon the methods of the arts which illuminated his . . . friendship"[1] with her.

In this chapter our concern is with the novels. Now we wish to determine whether there is any validity in applying the precepts of an artist and art critic to literature, and whether there are any points of comparison between the work of these three above-mentioned Post-Impressionists and that of Virginia Woolf. Have the many stipulations of Virginia Woolf's theory, we wonder, been applied to her novels? At this point we attempt to answer the question raised by Emily Stripes Watts: "Can a writer of prose borrow profoundly from another art form?"[2]

Like the Post-Impressionists, in her novels Virginia Woolf breaks firmly with the past. This can be seen in such small changes as a complete disregard for conventional chapter breaks in some of her novels. Another aspect of her departure from convention is to be found in her unconconcern with traditional ideas regarding plot. If we define plot as E.M. Forster, her contemporary and a member of the Bloomsbury group, defines it, "a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality,"[3] we will be quick to notice that in none of her experimental novels is Virginia Woolf a slave to plot. Her main concern is not with telling a story but with expressing 'idea' as Roger Fry puts it. Virginia Woolf is more concerned with "the secret life . . . life for which there is no external evidence."[4] At no point during the course of her experimental novels is the reader inclined or encouraged to wonder 'what happens next', or as Forster sees as a requirement for plot, why it happens. Whatever happens next in Virginia Woolf's novels has about it the inevitability which Fry considers a pleasing aspect of art. 'Why' it happens simply seems to invite the answer, 'because it was inevitable.' Johnstone tells us that much the same is true of painting:

> It follows that the greatest art will reveal to us the most complex, surprising, and yet, absolutely inevitable relationships. We are startled as we contemplate it, but we feel at once that it is right, that nothing within it could be otherwise than it is.[5]

Fry makes a similar claim when he insists that novels which endure,

> depend . . . for their effect upon a peculiar detachment from the instinctive life. . . .

> They note the inexorable sequence in life of cause and effect, they mark the total indifference of fate to all human desires, and they endeavour to derive precisely from that inexorability of fate . . . the pleasure which consists in the recognition of inevitable sequences . . . a pleasure derived from the contemplation of the relations and correspondences of form.[6]

In Virginia Woolf's novels even something as traumatic as death is understated, and treated in a matter-of-fact manner. Septimus' death, for instance, in Mrs. Dalloway, has little of the tragic about it. Septimus dies, Mrs. Ramsay (To the Lighthouse) dies, but everything goes on as before, for their deaths are simply a part of the overall pattern of life. There is little of the excitement and eager anticipation which is usually associated with death in the conventional plot. Virginia Woolf ignores the demands of plot in her more experimental novels because plot is not necessary in her attempt to express 'idea'.

This subordination of plot to idea is reminiscent of the Post-Impressionists' attempt to abandon narrative painting. It is not unlike Fry's insistence that the painter should ignore dramatic elements in his search for idea or significant form. Fry feels that dramatic or narrative elements have no place in the painter"s search for fulfilment through the arousal of aesthetic emotion in the spectator. Colour, light, shade, line, these all supersede the narrative elements in the painted work of art. As Johnston tells us:

> Fry believes that the visual artist can reach these depths only if he is true to

> the medium of his art and abjures psychological and dramatic suggestions in his work in order to concentrate wholly upon visual relations.[7]

The Post-Impressionists depend on explosive or violent colour to work part of the way in awakening the aesthetic sentiments of the spectator. Line, through continuity and flow, creates harmony and unifies all elements of the painting, the masses created by colour. In this way line goes the rest of the way to create 'idea' or as Fry also calls it, significant form. It is thus that pure aesthetic emotion is given birth and maintained untarnished. The Post-Impressionists feel that narrative elements in painting might produce what often passes for aesthetic emotion but which is simply a diversion from the true emotion. This is a bastard emotion which deludes the unwary and is not to be confused with the pure emotion which is the result of nothing else but perfect harmony of line and colour. This bastard emotion is the same emotion which Virginia Woolf hopes to avoid by her determined attempt to underplay plot.

As we have seen therefore, the Post-Impressionists considered it important that the artist free himself from convention, following it only when it became necessary for the presentation of his particular vision. On the whole they recommended that the artist try to find his own manner of presenting his vision. To Virginia Woolf this is equally important. Even in her earlier novels, The Voyage Out and Night and Day, Virginia Woolf shows signs of this attempt to break with the conventional writers. In her third novel, Jacob's Room, the signs are even more apparent, to the point where she commits the very crime of which she accuses many of her contemporaries; for, to the reader, "the effort and strain of writing against the grain and current of the the times is visible."[8]

This strain is found in the episodic nature of the novel. The episodes of Jacob's Room, although often very beautiful in themselves, are often too loosely linked together, so that the novel does not appear to be the perfect, unified object of art upon which Roger Fry insists. There are intensely haunting scenes and episodes in Jacob's Room. Virginia Woolf's failure to create suitable bridges between them causes them to remain just that --beautiful episodes. Therefore, the sensation of inevitability which Fry sees as essential to the work of art is sadly lacking. At times the novel appears contrived and as Johnstone tells us:

> When sentences from earlier descriptions of Jacob's rooms at Cambridge and Bloomsbury are repeated in the last chapter, we may have for a moment the feeling, which we sometimes know in life, that this has happened before --but only for a moment: then we see through the device, and reflect upon the mechanics of the novel, rather than upon the inevitability of Jacob's life.[9]

After we finish reading the novel we spend more time contemplating the skill of the author's pen and the crafty workmanship than we do in reflection on the successive unity of the novel; more time than we do in experiencing the aesthetic emotions which ought to follow. Form the novel certainly has, but somehow it falls just slightly short of Fry's definition of significant form. Quite clearly that which Virginia Woolf most abhors has happened --technique, skill has been allowed to overshadow idea. Jacob's Room, the first of the experimental novels, although by no means a failure, does from time to time show signs of the author's immaturity, signs of her attempts to experiment and break away from convention.

By the time she writes Mrs. Dalloway Virginia Woolf has become a master of her medium. Not only have all ties with the past been broken, but all the evidence of the effort it took to break them has been removed. The result is a unified and well ordered work without the traces of immaturity and struggle which are sometimes allowed to surface in Jacob's Room.

MRS. DALLOWAY

Form is an important aspect of art as Roger Fry and the Post-Impressionists see it. Without form, imaginative life, from which art is derived, remains uncontrolled, formless and chaotic. As Kenneth Clark says in the "Introduction" to Roger Fry's Last Lectures, in art "certain forms agree and our joy is not in the forms themselves, but in their agreement."[10] He is here paraphrasing a statement made in Vision and Design by Roger Fry. Fry is, of course, referring to form in the painted work of art, but it occurs to the reader that Virginia Woolf has achieved just such a 'joyful' agreement of forms in Mrs. Dalloway. If we regard the characters simply as forms in a picture, for the moment ignoring any of their deeper psychological aspects, this discovery is easily explained, especially if we bear in mind Cezanne's advice that the artist should place "everything in proper perspective so that each side of an object or a plane is directed toward a central point."[11]

Clarissa Dalloway stands at the centre of the picture. On the same plane as herself, perhaps somewhat right of centre and parallel to her so that their paths never meet, is Septimus Warren Smith. Arranged around them on a series of planes are the other characters. It is clear that the reader is expected to see Septimus and Clarissa as parallel to each other. They never meet each other although Clarissa has a moment of identification with Septimus when she learns of his suicide. This arrangement, where the two most important characters of the novel are placed side by side with a careful avoidance of physical contact with each other, serves to encourage the concept of two parallel lines in a picture. On the plane closest to Clarissa Dalloway are Peter Walsh, Sally Seton and perhaps Richard Dalloway and Hugh Whitebread, a little blurred and somewhat less distinct than the first two. These are all characters of importance in Mrs. Dalloway's past, but who appear also in her present. It is their importance in her past rather than her present which gives them their place of prominence on the closest plane. On another plane and receding into the distance are the most important characters of the present but with no significance in Mrs. Dalloway's past —Elizabeth, Miss Kilman, Lady Burton and Lady Bexborough. None of these characters, with the possible exception of Miss Kilman, are of any great importance to the novel. Mrs. Septimus Smith is on this plane also because, although she has some significance in

Septimus's life, she has no significance in Mrs. Dalloway's past. On another plane, yet further away, are those characters whom we see only for a moment, but who are a part of the significant network of moments in the novel --the little old lady, the little old man. Finally, on the plane furthest away are the other characters that we meet only briefly and who have connections with neither of the major characters. They are used as background for the picture. Mrs. Dalloway forms the central line of which Roger Fry says, "In a picture . . . unity is due to a balancing of the attractions of the eye about a central line of the picture. The result of this balance of attractions is that the eye rests willingly within the bounds of the picture."[12]

This arrangement is a familiar one in Cézanne's paintings. Quite frequently he chooses one prominent object as a central point of focus around which the other objects of the picture are arranged on various planes. An excellent example of this is Cézanne's painting, "The Tall Pine". At the centre of the picture is a tall tree, which runs almost exactly down the middle of the picture. Running parallel to this central object and on the same plane are the trunks of three other, smaller trees. There are several other planes in this picture. In the foreground is one plane of green earth. Behind this is a bright yellow/orange plane which is followed immediately by the central plane. Behind the central plane is a band of light green vegetation, followed by a section of trees a few shades deeper and brighter green in colour. The final plane, the sky, follows this.

Another picture, "Mont Sainte-Victoire" has a similar arrangement. In this picture too, colour is used subtly to indicate changes in plane. In his still life paintings Cézanne uses a similar technique. Quite often a bottle, a vase, a fruit is used to create a central, perpendicular line. Van Gogh and Gauguin use a similar technique. Gauguin's "Breton Landscape" has a similar arrangement. Here too a tree is the central object. Similarly the parallel lines are created by smaller trees on the same plane. The planes in this picture appear to be endless. Van Gogh's "Cornfield and Cypress Trees" repeats the pattern. Here the cypress tree serves as the central object and planes of orange, green blue and white follow each other.

In spite of Septimus' importance in the novel, the characters depend for their position in the picture on their relationship to Mrs. Dalloway. It is ironical, but certainly not accidental that the characters who have some part in Mrs. Dalloway's past appear on the plane closest to her. This is in keeping with Virginia Woolf's attempt to express something of the endless and all-encompassing aspect of nature and of reality --the past being just as important as the present. For example, Peter Walsh is far more important to Clarissa's past than he is to her present.

As Roberts points out, the relationship between Mrs. Dalloway and Septimus Smith offers an example of the satisfying aesthetic agreement of forms as defined by Roger Fry. Virginia Woolf tells us that these two characters are "one and the same person."[13] We do not need to depend on the author's intervention, ~~however~~. It is made extremely clear in the novel that the characters complement each other. They are "opposite phases of an idea of life itself."[14] They complete each other and are 'real' only within the limits of the novel, since Virginia Woolf sacrifices the individualism of actual life and of the conventional novel in her search for form.

Throughout the novel the author works at building the image of Septimus and Clarissa as complements of each other. They supply the dark and light highlights of the painted work of art. Perhaps the most obvious aspect of this relationship can be seen in what Roberts refers to as "Clarissa's elementary love of life and Septimus's repudiation of it."[15] It is not as simple as this, of course, for Clarissa has many of the negative qualities which are an integral part of Septimus' personality --"she always had the feeling that it was very, very, dangerous to live."[16] Conversely, Septimus has some positive qualities which are basic parts of Clarissa's nature. For example, just before he commits suicide he experiences Clarissa's love of life, of being alive, even deciding that "he would wait until the last moment" (p. 200) to kill himself, because, "He did not want to die, life was good" (p. 200). Generally, however, Clarissa represents the bright part of the form, that part which enjoys life; and Septimus represents the dark part, which feels constantly threatened by life. There is a certain inevitable order about the relationship of these two sides of this single form.

In the novel Septimus and Clarissa are less important in their roles as individuals and more important as basic parts of the formal pattern which is so important to Fry and the Post-Impressionists. An important aspect of the painter's job is linking the opposite sides of the picture together, as we will see clearly when we meet Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse. Virginia Woolf has a similar problem, especially when we consider that the two major characters of the novel do not ever come into physical contact with each other. Carefully arranged throughout Mrs. Dalloway are a number of incidents and rhythms designed specifically to create order and a sensation of inevitability about the formal relationship between Clarissa and Septimus —for the relationship is purely a formal one. There is the sensation on the part of the reader that everything about the relationship is as it should be and that nothing should or could be changed. This, it will be recalled, is one of Fry's requirements for the work of art; one which he found fulfilled in the painting of the Post-Impressionists.

One such rhythm is found in the recurring image of the coin being thrown into the Serpentine, which is not obtrusive enough to be considered a symbol. It first occurs as Septimus and Clarissa, unconscious of each other, watch some 'great being' drive down the London street. Clarissa becomes for a moment lost in her memories. For no apparent reason "she remembered once throwing a shilling into the Serpentine" (p. 11). The memory of this small incident tinkles through her thoughts and disappears again in the manner of a cloud. It occurs again in this fleeting manner when she hears of Septimus' suicide, towards the end of the novel, so that immediately the reader connects it with the throwing away of Septimus' life. In this subtle manner Septimus is given a little place in Clarissa's past, so that automatically he becomes eligible for a place of importance in the formal design.

Another such rhythm, almost as unobtrusive as that of the coin, occurs with the Shakespearean refrain, "Fear no more the heat o' the sun." The refrain occurs only once in its original form, as Clarissa remembers reading it once as a young woman in the past:

> Fear no more the heat o' the sun
> Nor the furious winter's rages. (p. 12)

Thereafter it appears in slightly altered forms. Whenever it appears it is with a light, glancing movement, appearing and disappearing just as quickly, almost invisible. Like the rhythm of the coin, there is nothing blatant in its presentation, but a curious gentleness and comfort. It seems to exist in the novel for no other reason but as an almost invisible thread, in the manner of an almost invisible line linking the two major forms of a picture together in an attempt to establish order and unity. It would be a mistake to consider either the throwing of the coin or the heat of the sun as symbols. There is too much of the intangible about them for such an interpretation. They are too fleeting and light in appearance. They simply serve to link two opposite sides of the picture in the manner of the Post-Impressionists.

The reader constantly sees incidents from the life of Septimus echoed in Clarissa's life, with sometimes only a subtle difference. There is, for example, the old man who appears and goes downstairs as Septimus 'throws away' his life. He is echoed in Clarissa's life by the old woman who goes upstairs as Clarissa thinks about Septimus' suicide and the coin thrown into the Serpentine. The use of these rhythms and echoes brings a certain balance and order to the novel, similar to the balance and order sought by the Post-Impressionist painters. As Roberts says,

> The reader's response to the whole is very much like that of one standing before a painting begins to see, as Fry would see, how this mass necessarily balances that, how this line repeats, with a difference that one, how a highlight here inevitably answers a shadow there, how, in other words the meaning of the picture lies in our discovery of the fact that the forms agree. . . . Our experience as we contemplate it is the pleasure that Fry would have found before a good picture —the recognition of order.[17]

Evidence of Virginia Woolf's break with the past is found in her stolid disregard of plot in Mrs. Dalloway. Since she is primarily concerned with 'the secret life', Virginia Woolf pays scant attention to chronology. Mrs. Dalloway is basically the presentation of various excerpts from the past of Clarissa, Peter Walsh, and to a lesser degree the past of Septimus. Because she is presenting the subconscious of these characters to the reader, Virginia Woolf roams at will backwards and forwards in time. Time changes from one paragraph to the next without warning as the reader is moved from one character to another. Time changes too within each individual's subconscious as he or she ranges from the present to the immediate past to the distant past, and not necessarily in that order. For example, Peter Walsh goes back and forth in time from his love affair with Clarissa to that with the married lady in India. There is no attempt to set the various reminiscences in any time relation to each other. There is not even an attempt to point out the order in which particular incidents of the reminiscences occur. Chronology has no place in this aspect of the novel.

Since chronology is unimportant to the development of Mrs. Dalloway, there is little scope for, or interest in causality and therefore little attention paid to plot development. Occurrences are presented merely as a part of the larger picture of life. Nothing of major importance appears to occur in the novel; or rather, events like Septimus' death which might normally be built up as major catastrophies in a different style of novel are downplayed and allowed to merge into the novel as inevitable parts of the flow of life and time. Septimus' death appears no smaller, but certainly no larger than any other event of daily existence. Septimus must die in order that Virginia Woolf complete her picture of life. Like Clarissa's action of throwing her coin into the Serpentine, Septimus' death has its place in the larger scheme of things. Who can tell which one makes the greatest ripple? This is the question that the author seems to be asking.

Chronology may not be important to the author of Mrs. Dalloway; however, as Roger Fry and the Post-Impressionists point out, chaos and muddle are detrimental to the work of art. Virginia Woolf shares this sentiment. She is aware that form is the important aspect of the type of work she wishes to present. Because order and unity are two very important aspects of form, although chronology plays no great role in her novel, she uses it to impose order on an otherwise chaotic situation. This makes one recall Gauguin's advice about shadow: Use shadow or do not use it, whichever suits your manner of expressing your vision; but do not be a slave to it. Having decided that a writer should not be a slave to chronology, Virginia Woolf uses it as a means to an end. In Mrs. Dalloway it becomes a backdrop for the more important features of the novel. The novel, as we have established, is devoted to the journey back in time of the main characters, not necessarily in chronological order. Memories appear and disappear as memories usually do, haphazardly without any regard to time sequence. In order to preserve some semblance of order, Virginia Woolf has, as a background, the chronological events of a single day in the life of Mrs. Dalloway. This steady and continuous thread running through the novel, adds boundaries which create order and unity in the novel.

There is no question of a grand resolution at the end of the novel, for what is there to be resolved? Peter Walsh seems to have returned to his early love of Clarissa as though to indicate that anything having once had existence continues to exist through all time. The reader never discovers, and does not find it important to do so, whether Clarissa's life will change in any way and whether Peter will return to his Indian lady. The author, it seems, wishes the reader to understand that if there are any changes these too will be absorbed into the general scheme of things, and as such, need not create excitement. Much as the reader might anticipate with pleasure the resolution of plot in a different type of novel --the tying of all loose ends so to speak-- in Mrs. Dalloway he is struck with the rightness of the situation in which there are no ends to be tied and no interest in causality. Mrs. Dalloway's party, Septimus' death, Peter Walsh's disenchantment, throwing a coin into the Serpentine, these are all small pieces in the larger puzzle of life. The reader clearly understands what Virginia Woolf is doing when he feels with Clarissa, glad that Septimus had killed himself,

> . . . glad that he had done it; thrown it away while they went on living. (p.206)

Septimus may have died but he is still as one with the trees and the sea and all of nature. The reader has, by the end of the novel, been conditioned to accept Septimus' death. Such statements as this one made by his counterpart, Clarissa, have helped the reader towards acceptance of the inevitability of death in the world of the novel:

> . . . did it matter that she must inevitably cease completely; all this must go on without her; did she resent it; or did it not become consoling to believe that death ended absolutely? but that somehow in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part she was positive, of the trees at home; of the house there . . .

> part of people she had never met; being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (pp. 11-12)

There is none of the sadness, therefore, which is conventionally connected with the death of a major character. There is no occasion for sorrow. Septimus will continue to be as long as there are other people and as long as there is nature. The idea is expressed too in a statement which Peter Walsh makes about Clarissa's belief that

> . . . one must seek out the people who completed them; even the places. Odd affinities she had with people she had never spoken to, some woman in the street, some man, behind a counter —even trees, or barns. It ended in a transcendental theory which, with her horror of death, allowed her to believe, or say that she believed . . . that since our apparitions, the part of us which appears, are so momentary compared with the other, the unseen part of us, which spreads wide, the unseen might survive, be recovered somehow attached to this person or that, or even haunting certain places, after death. (p. 169)

Septimus' death, therefore, simply effects his move on to another part of his existence; a move, moreover, which is absolutely necessary in the realm of the novel. The rightness of this situation and others forces the reader to recall Roger Fry's statement that everything about the completed work of art should appear as inevitable.

There is further evidence that like Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin, Virginia Woolf broke with convention. Conversation, or the lack of conversation, is another contributing factor to her departure from convention. Conversation has been used by an endless number of writers to lend a tone of verisimiltude, a touch of actual life to the novel. The reader expects and is usually given a great deal of conversational exchange between characters. This is one way of building character and of presenting to the reader a well 'rounded' and authentic-seeming set of individuals. Virginia Woolf is not particularly concerned with verisimilitude. Her aim is not to present an illusion but to present truth --a particular kind of truth which is not to be found in the easily reproduced surface of life. She uses conversation, therefore, sparingly and only when it is necessary in her expression of 'idea'. In Mrs. Dalloway, therefore, conversation has been reduced to the bare necessities. Where it does appear it is sketchy in the extreme. It is ironical that conversation, the surest way of communication between human beings, has often been used as a means of hiding inner truths. 'Small talk', about the weather, about time, has often been used to prevent undue probing into the 'real' qualities of human nature and into life generally. Because Virginia Woolf is concerned chiefly with the truths which light conversation attempts to conceal and not with appearances, she neglects conversation in her novels. Since character building in the manner that E.M. Forster describes it is not of particular interest to Virginia Woolf, she is doubly justified in limiting conversation. Clarissa is not a fully 'rounded' character. She needs Septimus to effect her completion. The author does not attempt to stress Clarissa's individuality but to make it clear that she is simply a part of her surroundings, a necessary part of course, but a part for all that which depends as heavily on her surroundings as they depend on her. Clarissa is more important as the central form in the work of art than as an individual.

Neither verisimilitude nor photographic representation is important to Virginia Woolf. The characters in this novel, even the more important ones, are all faceless. It is clear that Virginia Woolf has Post-Impressionistic ideas about portraiture. Although the reader grows to know Clarissa quite well, it is extremely difficult for him to give a complete description of her. Like the Post-Impressionists before her, Virginia Woolf does not believe in unnecessary detail. All we ever know of Clarissa's appearance is her pink face and birdlike aspect --colour and line.

Virginia Woolf could certainly never be accused of presenting her characters dressed down to the last button of clothing. The reader realizes, because of a few fleeting references, that the novel is set sometime soon after the end of the war. Virginia Woolf is very careful not to date her work by making specific references to any minor details of clothing or anything else which might be considered peculiar to a certain era. Mrs. Dalloway might be set in any period of history, in spite of the fleeting references to the war. This novel has relevance for any age. This we know to have been one aim of the Post-Impressionists. They too sought to imbue their work with a quality of agelessness. By placing all the emphasis on form and colour they succeeded, because these are two qualities which will remain important to all ages even though the degree of their importance may vary.

Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin all feel that the painter should get to know the artists of the Louvre, but he should leave them behind and go out on his own when he is about to create. Virginia Woolf feels much the same about the usefulness of the library. As Johnstone points out, Virginia Woolf "is well acquainted with the library, but has little use in her novels for the facts that it offers her".[18] Tied in with her dislike of conventional verisimilitude and photographic representation is her disregard of strict accuracy in recounting the technicalities of everyday reality:

> [S]o we may find as we read her books that there are tigers and elephants in South America or that Scarborough is 700 miles from Cornwall, her characters may feed wide awake chickens by lantern light or cut roses . . . in a Lincolnshire garden at christmas. . . . She would not have been concerned if these lapses had been pointed out to her; they do not after all injure her work.[19]

Fry compares the novel to a Chinese painting on rolls of silk, the unity of which "depends upon the forms being presented to us in such a sequence that each successive element is felt to have a fundamental and harmonious relation with that which preceded it."[20] He feels that because of this aspect of its nature, it is not possible to achieve with the novel the total, all-encompassing unity which is possible in a painting. The unity of the novel is rather a 'successive unity'. According to Fry, because of the successive unity of the novel, the manner in which the aesthetic emotion is aroused by a painting differs from that in which it is aroused by a novel. Time plays a large part in determining this difference. The spectator experiences the aesthetic emotion even as he looks at the painting. His aesthetic response is immediate. This is not so in the case of the reader. He does not experience the aesthetic emotion while he reads the novel. Rather, his experience is delayed until after the reading, upon reflection on the unified whole. Virginia Woolf is aware of this and attempts to rise above this limitation through the creation of her 'moments of being'. The reader still awaits the end of the novel for his total aesthetic experience, but there are moments within each of Virginia Woolf's novels when the reader is invited to experience brief moments of immediate aesthetic experience --moments when the aesthetic feeling created is as immediate and whole as that created by the painter. In order to achieve this Virginia Woolf creates moments of significance which have their existence within the novel as a part of the successive unity and yet exist on their own, almost as miniature objects of art in their own right. Johnstone describes such moments as

> . . . significant moments, moments when the pattern of life can be clearly seen, when sorrow becomes joy and ugliness gives way to beauty.[21]

This is not unlike a painting which through perfection of colour and line, merges the beautiful and the not so beautiful to create a perfect whole in which the 'ugliness' of particular objects is forgotten in the face of the unity which it helps to create. This is often true of the paintings of Van Gogh and Gauguin in particular who choose their subjects, not for their surface beauty but for their inner beauty and symmetry. Examples of this may be found in the paintings Van Gogh makes of himself while his ear is bandaged. Examples may be found too in Gauguin's paintings as for example, "Anna and the Javanese" and "Contes Barbares", in each of which there is a figure, almost deformed, which would probably be called ugly in everyday reality; and yet, this figure fits naturally and even inevitably into the symmetry of the pictures in question.

Mrs. Dalloway experiences such a moment of perfection when for no apparent reason she feels in tune with the world around her; in tune with the commonplace sounds such as the closing of the door, the swish of the maid's skirts, the whistling of the cook and the click of the typewriter. She experiences such a moment in this passage:

> She . . . felt blessed and purified, saying to herself, as she took the pad with the telephone message on it, how moments like this are buds on the tree of life, flowers of darkness they are, she thought (as if some lovely rose had blossomed for her eyes only). (p. 33)

Because the moment of simplicity is so perfect the reader feels with her the immediate aesthetic response which is possible before a picture.

Another such moment occurs when Peter Walsh watches the ambulance which takes Septimus' mangled body away. It is ironical that such a moment occurs at exactly this point. Peter does not know of Septimus' death, of course. However, the ambulance with its bell blaring heralds disaster. It is all the more impressive that Virginia Woolf should choose this time to create one of her exquisite moments. Even though Peter Walsh knows that the ambulance with its bell signals death or disaster, he registers the perfection of the moment. He sees in the moment an order and perfection which is found most often in art rather than in real life:

> One of the triumphs of civilization, Peter Walsh thought. It is one of the triumphs of civilization, as the light high bell of the ambulance sounded. Swiftly, cleanly, the ambulance sped to the hospital, having picked up instantly, humanely, some poor devil; someone hit on the head, struck down by disease, knocked over perhaps a minute or so ago at one of these crossings, as might happen to oneself. That was civilization. It struck him coming back from the East --the efficiency, the organization, the communal spirit of London. Every cart or carriage of its own accord drew aside to let the ambulance pass . . . was it not touching . . . the respect which they showed this ambulance with its victim inside --busy men hurrying home, yet instantly bethinking them as it passed of some wife; or presumably how easily it might have been them there, stretched on a shelf with a doctor and a nurse . . . really it took one's breath away, these moments; there coming to him by the pillar-box opposite the British Museum one of them, a moment in which things came together; this ambulance; and life and death. (pp. 167-168)

There are several such moments in Mrs. Dalloway, but they seem only to occur in the novel when a character feels in harmony with his surroundings; when for a brief moment he has insight into the rightness of things. These unexpected moments can occur even inspite of the unpleasantness of the character's situation. For example, Peter Walsh sees beauty and order in a moment fraught with terror and death. This is possible because, as in Fry's ideal object of art, subject is irrevelant; form is all-important. Peter Walsh sees order and unity because there is about the situation a curious inevitability. Everything is happening as it ought to be and nothing could legitimately be changed. Mrs. Dalloway explains what takes place at such moments and the effect which they have on one. She feels that

> (. . . strange is the power of sounds at certain moments). . . . Only for a moment; but it was enough. It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over - the moment. (p. 36)

The emotion which Mrs. Dalloway feels and that which Peter Walsh feels is equivalent, therefore, to the emotion which the spectator experiences as he stands before a perfect object of art. It is an experience which comes as a result of order, harmony, unity --the qualities which, when found in a work of a art, give rise to the aesthetic emotion. Scattered through the novel as they are, these moments create a delicately moulded network through the novel which works much as the rhythms --the heat of the sun and the throwing of the coin— do.

It will be remembered that although Roger Fry believed that form is an important aspect of art, he considered significant form to be even more important. Significant form occurs in a work, he said, when through the pleasing agreement of forms, the spectators are made to feel that the artist reveals in his work truths which they have always known subconsciously, but which have remained latent in themselves. The spectators are made to feel that the artist, by revealing these truths, reveals something of himself. This significant form is acheived when the work of art awakens in the spectators the feeling that nothing in the work could be changed without permanently disrupting the whole, and destroying some undefinable quality. With Septimus' death and Clarissa's satisfaction at his dying the author creates a moment of such perfection, a sense of the rightness of things. This rightness is echoed and reechoed in the form which the novel takes, in the rhythms, in the moments of being and in a myriad of other ways.

TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

The influence of Roger Fry and the Post-Impressionists reaches its peak in To the Lighthouse. As it does in Mrs. Dalloway, it becomes clear in To the Lighthouse that, like the artists she admired, Virginia Woolf is determined to break all the bounds imposed by convention, or at least as many of them as do not serve to express her vision. Once again she discards the conventional use of chapter division. To the Lighthouse is not, however, one continuous flow of narrative as is Mrs. Dalloway, which preceded it. Instead, the novel is broken into three main parts --"The Window", "Time Passes", and "The Lighthouse". Within each part there are other divisions of varying length. For example, while Section 1 of Part I fills over ten pages, Section 2 is limited to two sentences:

> 'No going to the Lighthouse, James', he said as he stood by the window, speaking awkardly, but trying in deference to Mrs. Ramsay to soften his voice into some semblance of geniality at least.
> Odious little man, thought Mrs. Ramsay, why go on to say that? (p. 18)

Section 15 of the same Part I is even shorter:

> 'Yes' said Prue, in her considering way, answering her mother's question, 'I think Nancy did go with them. (p. 91)

Section 6 of Part III is a mere three lines long and seems at odds with the remainder of the novel; a seemingly unnecessary insert, and one which certainly would not be deserving of an entire section in a conventional novel:

> [Macalister's boy took one of the fish and cut a square out of its side to bait his hook with. The mutilated body (it was alive still) was thrown back into the sea.] (p. 205)

In each case, an entire section is devoted to one, or in the case of Section 2, Part I, two sentences. This, naturally, draws attention to the section, as it is meant to do. For Section 2, Part I, the reason seems readily apparent; too much so perhaps. Why, of course, we think, the trip to the Lighthouse is a major event in the novel. Since these two sentences discuss the possible postponement of the trip, Virginia Woolf wants to have it stand apart for the reader. Were this the reason, however, would she not have chosen Mr. Ramsay's identical assertion to which to draw attention, rather than that of a minor character? Furthermore, he is the one who finally makes the trip, ten years later.

The choice to draw attention to these three incidents by allowing each a separate section of its own is very much in keeping with Virginia Woolf's vision. As we have seen with Mrs. Dalloway, Virginia Woolf sees as a part of her vision that every incident, every object has its own particular place in the general scheme of reality, none being more or less important in the overall picture, except to those closest to them. This point is made succinctly in To the Lighthouse when it dawns on Mrs. Ramsay that the Mannings still continue to exist even though she has not thought of them for years, just as she continues to be, even though they, in their turn, do not think of her:

> But how strange, she repeated, to Mr. Bankes' amusement, that they should be going on there still. For it was extraordinary to think that they had been capable of going on living all these years when she had not thought of them more than once all that time. How eventful her own life had been, during those same years. Yet perhaps Carrie Manning had not thought about her either. (p. 101)

Virginia Woolf wishes to point out that the great being who arranges all nature, be it God or some other super power, sees all incidents as equal. Man by his close emotional involvement in daily existence, is guilty of shifting particular incidents out of proportion to others. Chapter, or section divisions in To the Lighthouse, are used, not to indicate story development, but unconventionally; as a means of overstatement in order to point out that in the general scheme of nature or reality there are no great or little incidents --all are of equal importance. Her vision is different from that of conventional writers who attempt, it seems, to show that life is a collection of catastrophic events all somehow linked together; or if there are little moments, they are not the 'proper business' of art. Virginia Woolf, by elevating the moments of seeming unimportance --the sections discussed above, tries to show that the little moments are also the proper business of literature, for life is made of little else. She once wrote that

> So long as you write what you wish to write, that is all that matters; and whether it matters for ages or only for hours, nobody can say. But to sacrifice a hair of the head of your vision, a shade of its colour in deference to some headmaster with a silver pot in his hand or some professor with a measuring-rod up his sleeve is the most abject treachery, and the sacrifice of wealth and chastity which used to be said to be the greatest of human disasters, a mere flea-bite in omparison.[22]

She considers it a part of her vision to show that the little moments have their own importance, and if it means that she must break the rules of convention in order to present her vision, then she is prepared to do so.

Just as the vision of the Post-Impressionist painters differs from that of conventional painters, Virginia Woolf's vision differs from that of conventional writers. Her unconventional use of sectional division in To the Lighthouse has about it an aura of the Post-Impressionists' belief that the artist should feel a freedom about using his tools. That is, the end result is more important than the method of achieving it. The Post-Impressionists do not condemn conventional methods out of hand for they are not averse to using them in an unconventional manner in order to achieve the effect which they desire. In Mrs. Dalloway because it suits her purpose, Virginia Woolf ignores chapter or sectional divisions completely. In To the Lighthouse, however, by her use of sectional divisions, Virginia Woolf makes use of a conventional tool in an attempt to express her unconventional belief that all the events of daily existence are of equal importance in the grand design. This unconventional use of sectional divisions reminds the reader of Gauguin's statement regarding the use of shadow:

> I will get as far away as possible from that which gives the illusion of a thing, and since shadows are the trompe l'oeil of the sun, I am inclined to do away with them.[23]

However, Gauguin feels that if the shadow serves another artist in the completion of his creation then he is at liberty to use the shadow:

> If in your composition, shadow enters as a necessary form, it's a completely different thing. Thus if instead of a figure you put the shadow only of a person, you have found an original starting point, the strangeness of which you have calculated.[24]

Virginia Woolf's decision to ignore chapter division completely in Mrs. Dalloway resembles Gauguin's theory in that she completely ignores anything which does not work actively in the expression of her vision. By the time she writes To the

Lighthouse, however, she sees that the use of conventional sectional interruptions can work in her favour if used unconventionally and in an original manner. In effect, she takes Gauguin's advice and she puts in her 'shadow', thus proving that she is not a slave to her tools. The use of sectional divisions in To the Lighthouse is, therefore, a calculated choice as Gauguin would have it.

Another aspect of Virginia Woolf's departure from the conventional novel is found in her treatment of plot in To the Lighthouse. As John Hawley Roberts points out, although there is, of course, a story in To the Lighthouse, the story element of the novel assumes a minor role. There is no attempt to hold the audience spellbound or to create interest by detailed accounts of the more moving aspects of daily existence such as death, marriage and the characters' reaction to them. As Fry points out, the work of art should inspire aesthetic emotions, not the emotions associated with daily reality. The artistic or aesthetic reaction differs from that of everyday reality in that there is a detachment in the aesthetic reaction which responds not to sensations such as those engendered by catastrophic events of daily life, but to formal relationships. This comprises significant form. For example, the reaction the spectator experiences at the sight of Gauguin's picture "The Yellow Christ" is not that of pain or sorrow at Christ's suffering, but is caused entirely by the perfect agreement of bold colour and harmony of form.

Fry admits that it is not easy for literature to detach itself from the encouragement of this non-aesthetic response which is a response to objects, sensations and events. The very nature of the novel, its looseness, precludes total abstraction. After all, no matter how much the author tries to suppress it, the story element is always present. Virginia Woolf realizes this, and although her novel deals with conventional topics such as friendship, marriage, human relationships generally, and death, she treats them in an unconventional manner.

Look at the love story of Paul and Minta Doyle, for example. The story is not an unusual one in conventional literature. The courtship of two young people has had its place in the earliest forms of literature. It is ideal for plot development. Deliberately, however, the author precludes all thoughts of plot development by giving the reader intimate insight into the start of the relationship and after leaving it in the balance for a complete section, tells us without any further ado that their marriage turned out to be a failure. From courtship to a failed marriage is quite a quick step to take. The author does not ask us to experience the emotions which the characters might generally be expected to experience. By presenting the information starkly she prevents such a reaction as might impede the aesthetic experience. The Post-Impressionist painters by eliminating narrative painting achieve a similar effect. The objects of their picture do not aim to tell a story but exist only as formal entities --a part of the total design.

P

Mrs. Ramsay is the major character of To the Lighthouse. The reader grows to know her intimately by being allowed into her subconscious and into the subconscious of the other characters who constantly analyze her. In spite of this, in spite of her importance in the novel, we are presented with her death in an offhand, parenthetical manner which says more about Mr. Ramsay than it does about Mrs. Ramsay's death:

> [Mr. Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched out his arms one dark morning, but Mrs. Ramsay, having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.] (p. 146-147)

Mrs. Ramsay's death is treated as any other event. A prolonged description of Mrs. Ramsay's sudden and untimely death, and Mr. Ramsay's grief at it might very easily have raised in the reader just those emotions which Fry insists must not be a part of the aesthetic emotion. Had the reader been a party to the death scene itself, his reaction might have been the stock reaction usually associated with death in everyday reality and in the conventional novel. Because we are not permitted to grieve with Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay!s children, we are forced to take the death in our stride as just one more occurence in the overall pattern of reality. Since the work of art must have complete autonomy, Virginia Woolf solves the problem by presenting a conventional topic --death-- in a new manner, and in this manner preserving significant form.

A similar technique of minimizing the dramatic qualities of the novel is used in the treatment of two major events involving

Prue, Mrs. Ramsay's eldest daughter, for whom Mrs. Ramsay has dreams of great happiness. We are informed on one page that

> [Prue Ramsay, leaning on her father's arm, was given in marriage that May. What, people said, could have been more fitting? And, they added, how beautiful she looked!] (p. 150)

On the next page we are told:

> [Prue Ramsay died that summer in some illness connected with childbirth, which was indeed a tragedy, people said. They said nobody deserved happiness more.] (p. 151)

"What, people said, could have been more fitting? And they added, how beautiful she looked!" Here we have summed up for us the stock reaction to happiness in daily existence. Then we are given the stock reaction to sorrow, "It was indeed a tragedy, people said. They said nobody deserved happiness more." Somehow, the fact that we are told that it is a tragedy makes Prue Ramsay's death seem less tragic. The stark presentation of marriage, birth and death and the unemotional summary of the conventional reactions to them leave the reader with little choice but to accept the events and treat them, first as a part of the formal design of the novel, and second, simply as additional events in the complete framework of reality. The fact that we receive the emotions second hand help in our acceptance.

It should by now be clear what Virginia Woolf attempts to do. First of all she over-emphasizes events of minor importance in the novel, such as that regarding Macalister's boy. Conversely, she understates events, such as Mrs. Ramsay's death.

By doing this she has effectively drawn the emphasis away from conventional plot development and effectively indicated that all life is the business of the artist, nothing being too big or too little. She indicates too that every person, every object, every event has its own place in the overall design of reality. We are helped in such an interpretation by moments in the novel such as this discovery made by Lily:

> . . . Life, from being made up of little separate incidents which are lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it. (p. 55)

Virginia Woolf's attempt to show that all life, no matter how seemingly unimportant or small, is the business of the artist is reminiscent of Van Gogh's determination to paint the peasants, for instance, unadorned in their daily dress. He does not, like the conventional painters before him, believe that he should paint them in their Sunday best. To do so would be to indicate that he has some doubt about the peasants' right to be the business of art. But, like Virginia Woolf who comes after him, Van Gogh considers that nothing is too unimportant if it works effectively in the creation of his vision.

In character description Virginia Woolf breaks with convention. We are never given a complete description of any of the characters. Constant reference is made to particularly noteworthy features of the characters; noteworthy to an artist, that is. An example of this is Lily's Chinese eyes. We are given a complete description of none of the characters. What is interesting, also from an artist's point of view, is that we are often told nothing else but the colour of a character's eyes. We are told that Mrs. Ramsay has blue eyes and a straight nose. This is not remarkable if we bear in mind the Post-Impressionists' interest in colour and line. The Post-Impressionists often paid little attention to other minor details of facial outline. It is interesting to note that Virginia Woolf's sister, Vanessa Bell, is doing much the same thing in paint. For example, some of her characters are merely splashes of vivid colour, where the hat for instance and other clothing, and shape of the body is more important than facial detail. The faces of her figures are sometimes left quite indistinct and often left blank without any attempt to distinguish features, such as eyes, nose or mouth.

We are told repeatedly that Mrs. Ramsay is a beautiful woman. Mr. Tansley, for example, thinks "she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen" (p. 17). He feels considerable pride because he is carrying her bag when "a man digging in a drain stopped digging and looked at her; let his arm fall down and looked at her" (p. 18). She inspires Mr. Bankes to say of her that "Nature has but little clay . . . like that of which she moulded you" (pp. 34-35). Just what she looks like we are never told, however. We are never told because, like the Post-Impressionists and Fry, Virginia Woolf believes that the artist must delve beneath the surface to find the reality of the object or person being presented. In order to stress that this is what she has in mind, she asks us this about Mrs. Ramsay:

> But was there nothing but looks? People said.
> What was there behind it --her beauty, her

> splendour? . . . Or was there nothing? Nothing but an incomparable beauty which she lived behind, and could do nothing to disturb? (p. 34)

Mrs. Ramsay realizes that there is more to herself than can be seen on the surface. What is more, this is a part of herself which she does not always want to share with others. Like an artist she gives this inner self shape and colour:

> . . . now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of --to think; well not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All being and doing, expansive, glittering vocal, evaporated: and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others. Although she continued to knit, and sat upright, it was thus that she saw herself; and this self-having shed its attachments was free for the strangest adventures. (p. 72)

"A wedge-shaped core of darkness" --this is how she saw herself. It is perhaps because of her close association with Roger Fry and thus with the work of the Post-Impressionists, that Virginia Woolf places what is, for a writer, an inordinate degree of emphasis on colour and line, and is prompted to describe Mrs. Ramsay thus. While realizing that this manner of escape of the inner core is available to everyone, Mrs. Ramsay indicates that it is the artist, Lily or Carmichael, who usually finds it:

> to everybody there was always the sense of unlimited resources, she supposed; one after another, she, Lily, Augustus Carmichal must feel, our apparitions, the things you know us by, are simply childish. Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep. This core of darkness could go anywhere, for no one saw it. (p. 73)

Lily, with an artist's perception, realizes that there is more to Mrs. Ramsay than her surface beauty. Like Fry she finds it necessary to go beyond the surface, beautiful though it may be, to the reality beneath. In true Post-Impressionist manner she wonders what was there to Mrs. Ramsay that drew people to her, the mathematician as well as the artist:

> Was it wisdom? Was it knowledge, was it, once more, the deceptiveness of beauty, so that all one's perceptions, halfway to truth, were tangled in a golden mesh? Or did she lock up within her some secret which certainly Lily Briscoe believed people must have for the world to go on at all? (p. 54)

Like Lily, Virginia Woolf realizes that she must reach beneath the beautiful surface of Mrs. Ramsay in order to know the 'real' person; in order to catch the essence of her being. For Lily, since her medium is paint, the answer is to reach beneath the outer covering in order to find the essential shape of Mrs. Ramsay. Like the Post-Impressionists she searches for the basic symmetry beneath the surface. Like these artists too she is interested in the general outline, the basic geometrical shape which she sees beneath each surface. Sometimes she sees Mrs. Ramsay as a dome:

> As she sat in the wicker arm-chair in the drawing-room window she wore, to Lily's eyes, an august shape; the shape of a dome. (p. 60)

Later, when Lily's vision changes, she sees her as a "triangular purple shape" (p. 61). The shape changes, but it is interesting that in both cases Lily sees a geometrical shape and it is interesting too that she always sees it in some sort of colour. Lily always searches for and finds the basic shape beneath the outer visible layer. Even though Mrs. Ramsay "is famous for her beauty", the two artists, Virginia Woolf and Lily Briscoe (created by Virginia Woolf) ignore the outer details and go directly to the core of Mrs. Ramsay. Lily's medium is paint, therefore she reduces her to a "purple shadow". Virginia Woolf's medium is the written word, therefore, when she goes beneath the surface, instead of the essential artistic shape, she seeks out the essence of Mrs. Ramsay --the 'real' Mrs. Ramsay untouched by the artifice and pretense for those watching her. It is as if Virginia Woolf sets Lily Briscoe up in order that she might compare her own work with that of a painter. In character description, therefore, Virginia Woolf certainly ignores conventional approaches. Although we are told repeatedly of Mrs. Ramsay's beauty, we never see the outer person as clearly as we see the inner one. We know Mrs. Ramsay intimately and yet we can not describe her appearance. In their presentation of character, Virginia Woolf and her fictional painter, Lily have both pierced

> beneath the trivial, obvious characteristics of his subject, beneath the surface appearance to seize, perhaps, the profound, internal, plastic rhythms of a human head, or to come to an intimate intuitive understanding of animal life . . . this is more than a "realistic" account, given by the anxious delineation of wrinkles on fur, or what the man or animal looked like.[25]

Again, with the discernment which comes with artistic detachment, Lily expresses this idea well when she says of Mr. Carmichael that

> There was a famous man called Carmichael, she smiled, thinking how many shapes one person might wear, how he was that in the newspapers, but here the same as he had always been. (pp. 220-221)

It is not surprising, after what has gone before, that Lily thinks in terms of shapes. Although Carmichal and Lily Briscoe say very little to each other, Lily feels that they understand each other well. She has never read his poetry. "She did not know what he had done, when he heard that Andrew was killed, but she felt it in him all the same" (p. 221). She continues:

> They mumbled at each other on staircases; they looked up at the sky and said it will be fine or it won't be fine. But this was one way of knowing people, she thought; to know the outline, not the detail. (p. 221)

Form and meaning, says Roger Fry, should be one and the same. The Post-Impressionists certainly prove him to be correct; and it is under this premise that Virginia Woolf works in To the Lighthouse. The novel is largely a discussion, even a comparison of formal unity in human relationships and formal unity in art; while at the same time the author attempts a unified object of art. To the Lighthouse is a fictional expansion upon Fry's discussion in "An Essay in Aesthetics", which is about the difference between actual life and imaginative life.

In To the Lighthouse Mr. Ramsay and Mrs. Ramsay represent opposite sides. Mr. Ramsay represents factual life, life of untarnished truth which Fry refers to as actual life. Mr. Ramsay is described thus:

> What he said was true. It was always true. He was incapable of untruth; never tampered with a

> fact; never altered a disagreeable word to suit the pleasure or convenience of any mortal being, least of all of his own childeen, who sprang from his loins. (p. 6)

Mrs. Ramsay on the other hand, represents the artistic, the visionary side of actual life. At points she comes close to what Fry calls imaginative life. She is the creator and is described in terms suited to an artist:

> Her simplicity fathomed what clever people falsified. Her singleness of mind made her drop plumb like a stone, alight exact as a bird, gave her, naturally this swoop and fall of the spirit upon truth which delighted, eased, sustained. (p. 34)

Both Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay represent truth, and they are both singleminded in pursuit of it, but there are two different kinds of truth. Mr. Ramsay's is the uncompromising truth of the realist. He faces clean, clearcut fact. Mrs. Ramsay's is the truth of the artist, who delves further than the surface truth. Her truth, unlike her husbands's, can be bent and shaped to suit her pleasure. In this Mrs. Ramsay is reminiscent of Gauguin who tells us, 'no' he does not have a technique:

> Or rather I do have one, but it is very fugitive, very flexible, according to my disposition when I arise in the morning; a technique which I apply in my own manner to express my own thought without any concern for the truth of the common, exterior aspects of Nature.[26]

Mrs. Ramsay manipulates truth in an endeavour to obtain a more lasting and deeper reality. Whereas Mr. Ramsay feels that Mrs. Ramsay "flew in the face of facts" (p. 37), Mrs. Ramsay says of Mr. Ramsay's theory that

> To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veils of civilization so wantonly, so brutally, was to her a horrible . . . outrage of human decency. (p. 38)

The polarity which exists between the two characters is described by Mrs. Ramsay in these terms:

> Every throb of this pulse seemed, as he walked away, to enclose her and her husband, and to give each that solace which two different notes, one high and one low, struck together, seemed to give each other as they combine. (p. 46)

The reader sees, therefore, that this couple set up a contrast, one against the other --brightness on one side is balanced necessarily by shade, Mr. Ramsay on the other.

Mrs. Ramsay tends to lean towards artistic vision as opposed to stark truth. However, she turns her energies not towards unity in art but towards unity in human relationships. Instead of paint or words, she manipulates people. Mrs. Ramsay craves for order in the interreaction of the people around her. Since the ultimate relatiohship possible between human beings is that which exists between husband and wife, she turns her attention, naturally, in that direction. We learn through Lily's subconscious that Mrs. Ramsay would insist that

> She must, Minta must, they all must marry, since in the whole world, whatever laurels might be tossed to her . . . or triumphs won by her . . . there was no disputing this: an unmarried woman has missed the best of life. (p. 58)

Marriage, she believes, creates the surest bond that there is between two people. She therefore encourages the courtship between Minta and Paul. She tries to arrange a marriage between Lily and William Banks.

We realize at the dinner party that Mrs. Ramsay's problem closely resembles that of the artist. She must connect this person with that; this group with that, so as to achieve order She often decides to shift this person in order to unite him with that one:

> . . . William must marry Lily . . . she must arrange for them to take a long walk together.
> Foolishly, she had set them opposite each other. That could be remedied tomorrow. (p. 120)

She can see people being together only in terms of unity and disorder. When she sees Lily and William walking together she thinks immediately, "they must marry":

> Ah, but was that not Lily Briscoe strolling along with William Bankes? . . . Yes, indeed it was. Did that not mean that they would marry? Yes, it must! What an admirable idea! They must marry! (p. 83)

When the dinner gong goes off, ideally, it calls everyone to order in the manner that Mrs. Ramsay desires:

> [T]he great clangour of the gong announced solemnly, authoritatively, that all those scattered about in attics, in bedrooms, on little perches of their own, reading, writing, putting the last smooth to their hair, or fastening dresses, must leave all that . . . and assemble in the dining room. (p. 95)

Here, with this powerful description one can almost see an artist at work, actively drawing discordant edges and shapes together. But although this works in theory it does not work in practice, for Minta, Paul, Andrew and Nancy are late. Of the ones who have assembled, though they are united in body, they are quite separate in spirit. All is not as Mrs. Ramsay would have it. There is something, perhaps unity, missing in her picture:

> Nothing seemed to have merged. They all sat separate. And the whole effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her. (p. 96)

Here we see that even her language is that of an artist. Surrounded though he is by people, Mr. Tansley still manages to feel "very rough and isolated and lonely" (p. 100). He feels that everyone despises him and since there is no force capable of uniting them, (not even Mrs. Ramsay), he finds himself thinking:

> If only he could be alone in his own room working . . . among his books. That was where he felt at ease. (p. 100)

Mr. Tansley sees Mrs. Ramsay's efforts to unite her friends as nothing more than a waste of time, a sacrifice. With Mr. Bankes too she fails at dinner. He finds himself thinking that

> such are the sacrifices one's friends ask of one. It would have hurt her if he had refused to come. But it was not worth it for him. Looking at his hand he thought that if he had been alone dinner would have been almost over now; he would have been free to work. Yes, he thought now, it is a terrible waste of time. (p. 102)

Mr. Bankes finds the dinner party 'trifling' and 'boring' (p. 102). He is unlike Mrs. Ramsay in that, although Mrs. Ramsay has brief moments of wanting to be alone, generally he prefers to be alone. He is widowed without any children and seems on the whole to find his state of being most satisfactory. But having accepted his manner of existence as suitable, he still wonders what life is all about:

> The truth was that he did not enjoy family life. It was in this sort of state that one asked oneself, what does one live for? Why, one asked oneself, does one take these pains for the human race to go on? Is it so very desirable? Are we attractive as a species? Not so very much . . . Is human life like this? (p. 103)

He feels that one can find relief from disturbing questions such as these by keeping oneself occupied. He busies himself with mathematics in order to prevent this painful questioning of life's purpose. What he does not realize is that it is for a similar reason that Mrs. Ramsay occupies herself with creating the unity which he now criticises: Her children, her husband, her friends, they provide the escape for her. Mr. Bankes does not find relief in a search for unity in human relationships because he accepts that this is a unity which will not last:

> It had struck him, thinking how surprised Mrs. Ramsay was that Carrie Manning should still exist, that friendships, even the best of them, are frail things. One drifts apart He reproached himself again. He was sitting beside Mrs. Ramsay and he had nothing in the world to say to her. (p. 103)

In effect then, Mrs. Ramsay, like any artist, looks for something other than the outer signs of unity. This is why the disunity among the gathering does not escape her. She realizes that while her friends and family are gathered together in body, they are separate in spirit. In order to bridge the gaps between them, she makes conversation "to fill up space". The filling of space is always, it will be remembered, a deep concern of the painter. So once again we find that Mrs. Ramsay is being presented in the light of the artist. Like the Post-Impressionists she never gives up the search for unity. She makes another attempt to fill the space so abhorrent to her by

> making use, as she did when she was distracted, of her social manner. So, when there is a strife of tongues at some meeting, the chairman, to obtain unity suggests that everyone speak in French. Perhaps it is bad French. French may not contain the words that express the speaker's thoughts; nevertheless speaking French imposes some order, some uniformity. (pp. 103-104)

This does not prove, however, to be the 'stroke' with which Mrs. Ramsay will obtain unity. She must try again. Mr. Tansley for one does not understand her language. He "at once suspected its insincerity" (p. 104). He feels that the people gathered about him talk nonsense, and he is just as lonely and separate as ever:

> sitting stuck there with an empty seat beside him nothing had shaped itself at all. It was all in scrapes and fragments. He felt extremely, even physically, uncomfortable. He wanted somebody to give him a chance of asserting himself. He . . . looked at this person, then at that person, tried to break into their talk, opened his mouth and shut it again... . . Why did no one ask his opinion. (p. 104)

Because Lily is an artist she understands, without having to be told, the predicament in which Mrs. Ramsay finds herself. Responding to Mrs. Ramsay's silent appeal --"I am drowning, my dear, in seas of fire. Unless you apply some balm to the anguish of this hour and say something nice to that young man, life will run upon the rocks"-- (p. 106) Lily Briscoe in the true artist's spirit, rescues Mr. Tansley with a very simple request that he take her to the Lighthouse tomorrow. This is perhaps the first stroke in the creation of unity at Mrs.

Ramsay's dinner party. It is thus that Mrs. Ramsay takes one small step towards unity in human relationships; but at what cost to Lily Briscoe! For Lily is not sincere in her overture of friendship towards Mr. Tansley. This admission forces Lily to speculate on the shallowness of human relationships:

> She had done the usual trick --been nice. She would never know him. He would never know her. Human relations were all like that, she thought, and the worst . . . were between men and women. Inevitably these were extremely insincere. (p. 107)

In order to achieve the permanent unity which Mrs. Ramsay desires, human beings would need to give perhaps too much of themselves. Another example of this shallowness in human relationships is found in Minta's relationship with Mr. Ramsay: Minta "made herself act even more ignorant than she was, because he liked telling her she was a fool . . . directly he laughed at her, she was not frightened" (p. 113) of him.

The Ramsays have as good a marriage as is possible, it seems. They love, and depend on, each other. Lily, being an artist, is quick to recognise this closeness:

> Directly one looked up and saw them, what she called 'being in love' flooded them. They became part of the unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love. The sky stuck to them: the birds sang through them. (p. 55)

Lily understands, because she has the detachment of an artist, the unity which is possible at moments between people who love each other deeply, between husband and wife:

> So that is marriage, Lily thought, a man and a woman looking at a girl throwing a ball.

> That is what Mrs. Ramsay tried to tell us the other night she thought. . . . For . . . they were standing close together watching Prue and Jasper throwing catches. And suddenly the meaning which, for no reason at all, as perhaps they were stepping out of the Tube or ringing a doorbell descends on people, making them symbolical, making them representative, came upon them, and made them in the dusk standing, looking, the symbols of marriage, husband and wife. (p. 84)

In moments transfixed such as this one, every object in the world seems to settle into its rightful place and all is right, but, alas, as Lily and Mrs. Ramsay are both aware, the moment ends.

Although Mrs. Ramsay never gives up her vision of unity in human relationships, she is not herself deluded by the shortcomings inherent in them. Even at the moment when she claims that she and her husband are as well suited as two musical notes, one high, and one low, she admits that

> as the resonance died . . . she . . . felt not only exhausted in body . . . but also there tinged her physical fatigue some faintly disagreeable sensation with another origin . . . it was the other thing . . . not being able to tell him the truth, being afraid, for instance, about the greenhouse roof and the expense it would be . . . and then about his books, to be afraid that he might guess, what she a little suspected, that his last book was not his best . . . and then to hide little daily things . . . all this diminished the entire joy, the pure joy, of two notes sounding together, and let the sound die on her ear now with a dismal flatness. (pp. 46
> (pp. 46-47)

Although she never admits defeat, Mrs. Ramsay recognizes clearly the limitations of human relationships. She realizes too that constant or permanent unity is impossible in everyday reality because of the unpredictable and emotional nature of human beings. Moreover, there is a part of each individual which cannot be shared even with those closest to them:

> She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something real, something private, which she shared with neither her children nor her husband. (p. 69)

There are moments when even Mrs. Ramsay, the creator of human unity, needs above all else, solitude which by its very nature threatens unity; but she needs solitude sometimes in order

> to think; well not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others. (p. 72)

Being aware of the chaos which is a natural part of daily existence, Mrs. Ramsay wonders whether her attempts to create unity are at all feasible: She admits that

> [S]he felt this thing she called life terrible, hostile, and quick to pounce upon you if you gave it a chance. There were the eternal problems: suffering, death; the poor. There was always a woman dying of cancer even here. And yet she had said to all these children, You should go through with it. To eight people she had said relentlessly that. (p. 70)

Mrs. Ramsay, we see therefore, accepts that there are moments in life when unity among human beings is simply not possible. She is faced with the realization that there are moments in her children's future when "love and ambition and being wretched al alone in dreary places" (p. 70) will be unavoidable. At such moments the order which she covets will be denied them. This realization leads her to another that she was perhaps "driven on, too quickly . . . almost as if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must have children" (p. 70). Mrs. Ramsay seems to be in the sway of some power bigger even than herself. Like any Post-Impressionist she seems compelled to present her vision in spite of whatever odds may be against her and whatever shortcomings her vision might have. She knows that her desire to create order between husband and wife does not offer unity pure and simple; however, "whatever she might feel about her own transaction . . . she was driven on . . . to say that people must marry" (p. 70). People simply must take the step necessary to effect the greatest unity possible in human relationships. Mrs. Ramsay recognizes her compulsion even as she asks herself, "Was she wrong in this?" (p. 70) At one point, dissatisfied with the obvious limitations of human relationships and of life generally, she wonders, "How could any Lord have made this world?" (p. 74) a world in which there is "no reason, order, justice: but suffering, death, the poor. There is no treachery too base for the world to commit; she knew that. No happiness lasted; she knew that" (p. 74). Being only human herself, she cannot avoid the moments of disunity which occur even in the most ideal of human bonds, marriage, even her own marriage. For her own marriage is not a perfect example of unmitigated bliss. If Mrs. Ramsay has her reservations about her marriage, Mr. Ramsay too has his. He often feels excluded from Mrs. Ramsay's orbit and notices "the sternness at the heart of her beauty" (p. 75) which saddens him; and her "remoteness" which pains him. He feels that "He could do nothing to help her. He must stand by and watch her." At such moments Mr. Ramsay can do but little to remove the barriers set up by Mrs. Ramsay. They are poles apart with nothing to fill the empty void between them. Unfortunately, Mrs. Ramsay cannot draw, as the artist does, upon the assistance of a simple line or a touch of balancing colour to help her out of her dilemma. Human nature being what it is, these periods of disunity remain and cannot be avoided.

A striking example of this disunity is found in the scene where, walking with his wife, Mr. Ramsay "wanted to tell her that when he was walking on the terrace just now --here he became uncomfortable, as if he were breaking into that solitude, that aloofness, that remoteness of hers" (p. 78). Although Mrs. Ramsay pressed him to tell her, he cannot because she too feels uncomfortable. "They both felt uncomfortable as if they did not know whether to go on or go back" (p. 78). She wants to tell him that "she had been reading fairy tales to James", but "No, they could not share that; they could not say that" (p. 79). Because he finds himself unable to share with his wife at that particular moment, Mr. Ramsay decides to go off on his own. At this moment the Ramsays are neither together in body nor in spirit.

These moments of disunity are apparently frequent. At dinner, as Mrs. Ramsay watches Mr. Ramsay, she asks herself, "But what have I done with my life?" (p. 95) Even as she arranges her friends and family around her in her quest for unity, she questions the closest of all possible human bonds --marriage. "She could not understand how she had ever felt any emotion or any affection for him" (p. 96). Even between mother and daughter, Mrs. Ramsay realizes, there are serious limitations in the relationship. She thinks when she notices her daughter's adoration of herself,

> Like all feelings felt for oneself, Mrs. Ramsay thought, it made one sad. It was so inadequate, what one could give in return; and what Rose felt was quite out of proportion to anything she actually was. . . . Rose would suffer, she supposed, with those deep feelings.((p. 94)

The trace of the artist in Mrs. Ramsay will not permit her to delude herself. In spite of all her efforts to include Mr. Carmichael in the general unity which she tries to create, Mr. Carmichael does not respond. Realizing this and her hurt at his lack of response, Mrs. Ramsay tries to be honest with herself. Why does she strive for unity? Is "all this desire of hers to give, to help . . . vanity?" (p. 49)

> For her own self-satisfaction was it that she wished so instinctively to help, to give, that people might say of her, 'O Mrs. Ramsay! dear Mrs. Ramsay . . . Mrs. Ramsay, of course!' and need her and send for her and admire her? . . . She did not feel merely snubbed back in her instinct, but made aware of the pettiness of some part of her, and of human relations, how flawed they are, how despicable, how self-seeking, at their best. (p. 49)

Lily too recognizes the self-gratification in Mrs. Ramsay's quest and claims that "it was one of those misjudgements of hers that seemed to be instinctive and to arise from some need of her own rather than of other people's" (p. 97). Similarly, Lily sees that Mr. Tansley's attempt to find unity with those around him by insisting that "women can't write, women can't paint" (p. 99) was calculated not so much to hurt herself, as to appease his own lonliness, and she asks herself, "What did that matter coming from him, since clearly it was not true to him but for some reason helpful to him, and that was why he said it?" (p. 99) His desire to elevate himself even at the expense of Lily's feelings on the matter proves again the frailty and the self-centered nature of human relationships. Mr. Tansley, Mrs. Ramsay is convinced, is always "thinking of himself and the impression he was making":

> She could see how it was from his manner --he wanted to assert himself, and so it would always be with him till he got his Professorship or married his wife, and so not always say 'I-I-I'. (p. 122)

It will be remembered that work serves as a means of lifting Mr. Bankes out of himself in a manner similar to that predicted by Mrs. Ramsay in the case of Mr. Tansley. Mrs. Ramsay hopes that "if no woman would look at him: (p. 119) and the closest of human unions remain out of his reach, then at any rate Mr. Tansley will have his work to turn to. She feels all the same that his discomfiture at dinner is due pure and simple, to the fact that "Prue will not be nice to him" (p. 122). Once again she turns to unity in human relationships as a solution to her problems. In spite of all the shortcomings Mrs. Ramsay does not give up her search for unity in human relationships. It is clear therefore, that her creator, Virginia Woolf, fashioned her almost in the image of the Post-Impressionist artist. We say almost because, although she comes so close, it is Lily Briscoe, the true artist, who is the full and complete image of the Post-Impressionist artist. In spite of her attempt to find order and her unceasing search for lasting unity, Mrs. Ramsay still remains, as the author intends her to do, a lively embodiment of actual life.

A pessimistic reader is bound to say that Mrs. Ramsay fails in her attempt to create unity in human relationships. "One would have to say to her", as Lily so rightly points out, that "it has all gone against your wishes" (p. 198). For, the marriage of Minta Doyle and Paul, arranged by Mrs. Ramsay "had not been a success" (p. 198). Lily Briscoe is still unmarried in spite of Mrs. Ramsay's efforts; and Mr. Bankes never remarries in spite of Mrs. Ramsay's determination to change these situations. Furthermore, Mrs. Ramsay is powerless against death which breaks at least the physical bond between Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay.

But in spite of her periods of doubt, Mrs. Ramsay is an optimist. Realizing that her dream of complete and lasting unity in human relations is not possible, she is willing to salvage from the chaos as many moments of complete unity as are possible. The marriage of Minta and Paul may not have lasted, but there remain for ever those few moments of perfect unity or order or happiness which they shared in Mrs. Ramsay's presence.

Such "significant moments, moments when the pattern of life can be clearly seen, when sorrow becomes joy and ugliness gives way to beauty",[27] give her life meaning and direction. Like her son James, Mrs. Ramsay "has the power to crystallize and transfix the moment" (p. 5). In spite of the flawed nature of "the most perfect" of human relationships, she reaches out to rescue from them those particular moments in which she sees the possibility of endurance. In this she resembles the Post-Impressionists who attempt to create perfection and order out of the muddle and chaos around them. They too realize that nature, despite her beauty, is imperfect. They realize that nature is chaotic, disordered and quite often lacking the unity which they crave. It is for this reason that they insist that their work must be creations in themselves and not simply reproductions of nature. It is easier for the Post-Impressionist to crystallize the moment than it is for Mrs. Ramsay. This is simply because he refuses to bow to the restrictions of the conventional artists and also because he does not have to make Mrs. Ramsay's concessions for the vagaries of human nature. In spite of her limitations, however, Mrs. Ramsay manages to chrystallize the moment as well as any Post-Impressionist artist does. We have proof of this in Lily's constant recall of particular events that have occured in Mrs. Ramsay's life, long after she is dead.

Repeatedly Mrs. Ramsay is shown as taking relief in the moment, because in actual life that is perhaps the only possibility of unity. Perhaps the most flawed of human relationships to be found in To the Lighthouse is that between Mrs. Ramsay and Augustus Carmichael, who makes his dislike of her quite plain. Yet, Mrs. Ramsay finds one of these moments of intense reality with Mr. Carmichael. They are both looking at Rose's arrangement of fruit when Mrs. Ramsay finds content in a moment of being:

> Thus brought up suddenly into the light it seemed possessed of great size and depth, was like a world in which one could take one's staff and climb up hills . . . and go down into valleys, and to her pleasure (for it brought them into sympathy momentarily) she saw that Augustus too feasted his eyes on the same plate of fruit plunged in, broke off a bloom there, a tassle here, and returned, after feasting, to his hive. That was his way of looking, different from hers. But looking together united them. (p. 112)

For a while during dinner Mr. Bankes feels out of charity with Mrs. Ramsay. He considers her critically and can think of nothing to say to her. Then when the cook's masterpiece, "Boeuf en Daube", is served, his feelings of resentment towards her change:

> It was rich, it was tender. It was perfectly cooked. How did she manage these things in the depths of the country? he asked her. She was a wonderful woman. All his love, all his reverence had returned; and she knew it. (p. 116)

These brief moments of perfection are well worth waiting for. Mrs. Ramsay feels "spurred on by her sense that William's affection had come back to her, and that everything was alright again . . . and now she was free to triumph" (p. 116). She becomes, in consequence, fired by this moment of beauty, "all lit up ---without looking young, she looked radiant" (p. 117).

Another of these moments of intense reality which are avidly collected by Mrs. Ramsay, occurs as she is serving second helpings to family and guests:

> Everything seemed possible. Everything seemed right. Just now (but this cannot last, she thought, dissociating herself from the moment . . .) just now she had reached security; she hovered like a hawk suspended . . . looking at them all eating there, from husband and children and friends . . . all of which rising in this profound stillness . . . seemed now for no special reason to stay there like a smoke, like a fume rising upwards, holding them safe together. There it was all around them. . . . She felt . . . there is a coherence in things, a stability, something, she meant, is immune from change . . . and she had the feeling . . . of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made made that remains for ever after. This would remain. (pp. 120-121)

Even as Mrs. Ramsay feels the rightness of the moment, even as she feels peace and rest, she admits that "this cannot last". This realization forces her to live the moment more intensely than she would normally, so that "joy filled every nerve of her body fully." Ironically, it is the question "how long do you think it'll last?" (p. 123) asked as part of the discussion of art which is going on around the table, which breaks the suspension of the moment.

Mrs. Ramsay experiences her intense moments with relief and gratitude. The dinner scene ends with a moment which shows Mrs. Ramsay in the very act of attempting to crystallize and transfix the moment. Unlike the earlier examples which show Mrs. Ramsay in a passive role, accepting the transitory nature of unity in human relationships and revelling in the intensity of the moment of perfection, here her role is a more active one. One can see her in the process of creating almost as forcibly as Cézanne or Van Gogh or Gauguin:

> Without knowing why, she felt that he [Mr. Carmichael] liked her better than he had ever done before; and with a feeling of relief and gratitude she returned his bow and passed through the door which he held open for her.
>
> It was necessary now to carry everything a step further. With her foot on the threshold she waited a moment longer in a scene which was vanishing even as she looked, and then, as she moved . . . and left the room, it changed, it shaped itself differently; it had become, she knew, giving one last look at it over her shoulder, already the past. (p. 128)

In spite of her attempt "to carry everything a step further", however, the moment ends, for "directly she went a sort of disintegration set in [among her friends and family]; they wavered about, went different ways" (p. 129).

Through Mr. Ramsay on the one hand, with his dedication to unvarnished truth; and Mrs. Ramsay on the other, with her concern for unity in human relationships and her attempts to crystallize the moment, Virginia Woolf therefore attempts to define Fry's term, "actual life". Both Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are needed in order to give a complete picture of actual life, but it is on Mrs. Ramsay that Virginia Woolf focuses chiefly. Like Fry, Virginia Woolf is preoccupied with form. Fry, with Post-Impressionist painting as his precedent, decrees that in a unified picture, "this mass necessarily balances that . . . this line repeats, with a difference that one." He insists that forms must agree if order is to be imposed. In keeping with this teaching, Virginia Woolf, having on the one hand offered a picture of actual life, must, in order to create a balanced work of art, represent imaginative life on the other. Standing as the lines which repeat "with a difference" Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, are Lily Briscoe and Augustus Carmichael. It is on Lily that Virginia Woolf focuses in her pursuit of imaginative life, just as it is on Mrs Ramsay that she focuses in actual life.

Lily, with the keen detachment of the artist, is fully aware of Mrs. Ramsay's attempt to create order in her life. In the final part of the novel, "The Lighthouse", Lily claims that Mrs. Ramsay made of the moment something special "like a work of art" (p. 183). Mrs. Ramsay, she tells the reader, said,

> 'Life stand still here'; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent. . . . In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing . . . was struck into stability. Life stand still here, Mrs. Ramsay said. (p. 183)

Moreover, perhaps more clearly even than Mrs. Ramsay, Lily realizes that life is simply a series of moments joined together. In her opinion, "life from being made of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became . . . whole" (p. 55). No less keenly than Mrs. Ramsay does Lily feel the intensity of certain moments. Mrs. Ramsay is quick to sense a kindred spirit in Lily and tells herself that "Lily anyhow agrees with me" (p. 119).

Evidence of Lily's awareness of moments of being is found throughout the novel. Her sentiment at a moment of complete kinship with Mr. Bankes is described thus:

> Suddenly, as if the movement of his hand had released it, the load of her accumulated impressions of him tilted up, and down poured in ponderous avalanche all she felt about him. That was one sensation. Then up rose in a fume the essence of his being. That was another. She felt herself transfixed by the intensity of her perception. (pp. 28-29)

Lily and Charles Tansley irritate each other at the best of times and yet Lily experiences in his company a moment of intense feeling when all seems perfect in the world around them as they play ducks and drakes, watched by Mrs. Ramsay:

> That woman sitting there, writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness and spite (she and Charles squabbling . . . had been silly and spiteful) something --this scene on the beach for example, this moment of friendship and liking . . . which survived after all these years, complete, so that she dipped into it to refashion her memory of him, and it stayed in the mind, almost like a work of art. (pp. 182-183)

But although Lily recognizes these moments of intense reality in daily existence, and cherishes them, she does not turn to actual life in her search for unity. Her moment of intense reality is almost like a work of art, but not a work of art, because she is still too close to the moment to create the detachment necessary before a work of art is completed. Like the Post-Impressionists, she realizes that after first studying her subject and getting well-acquainted with it, she must assume the necessary detachment. Mrs. Ramsay never achieves the perfect unity which she desires because she is herself a part of the actual life and as such finds it impossible to acquire the detachment which is essential, according to Fry. Lily on the other hand, draws from her experience in actual life before applying it to imaginative life. For example, Lily is very attached to Mrs. Ramsay and wants to become one with her. However, because she can assume the detachment of an artist, it is from Lily chiefly that we manage to get a many-sided picture of Mrs. Ramsay's character. This detachment allows for clearer analysis.

Lily does not attempt to find the unity she desires in actual life because she understands that human relationships are flawed. She knows that unity in such relationships depends too much on the whims of persons entirely outside her control. She prefers to seek unity in art where balance and order are not affected by the moods of others. Charles Tansley, she claims for instance, manages to "upset the proportions of one's world" (p. 223). Art imposes the order which, by its very nature, actual life lacks. Furthermore, she is aware that man's most sophisticated means of communication, the spoken word, is inadequate. When she tries to analyze her feelings about Mrs. Ramsay she concludes that there is no suitable way to express to Mrs. Ramsay exactly how she feels about her because the spoken word will not permit her to do so: "It was absurd, it was impossible. One could not say what one meant" (p.23):

> no, she thought, one could say nothing to nobody. The urgency of the moment always missed its mark. Words fluttered sideways and struck the object inches too low.
> (p. 202)

Actual life does not serve Lily in her bid to find unity because she understands that since life is as unpredictable as it is, it becomes impossible for anyone to impose any kind of order on it. It is by its very nature chaotic, goes its own way and needs answer to nothing and no one. This uncertainty in life disturbs Lily:

> Was there no safety? No learning by heart the ways of the world? No guide, no shelter, but all was miracle, and leaping from the pinnacle of a tower into the air? Could it be, even for elderly people that this was life? --Startling, unexpected, unknown? For one moment she felt that if they both got up, here, now on the lawn, and demanded an explanation, why was it so short, why was it so inexplicable, said it with violence . . . then, beauty would roll itself up; the space would fill; those empty flourishes would form into shape. (pp. 204-205)

But unfortunately this is not possible. Life is inexplicable and the unexpected usually happens, so Lily chooses to fill the blank spaces and create form through imaginative life instead.

Lily's decision to seek unity in imaginative life is made in full awareness. She is fully aware that Mrs. Ramsay feels that she, like everyone else, should get married. She is aware too that Mrs. Ramsay feels sorry for Mr. Banks, the "poor man! who had no wife and no children" (p. 97). Lily realizes though that "He is not in the least pitiable" (p. 97) since he has found a substitute in his work. This leads Lily to the realization that she need not marry either: "she remembered, all of a sudden as if she had found a treasure, that she too had her work" (pp. 97-98). Her painting rescues her in times of difficulty in actual life. For example, she faces her insincerity towards Mr. Tansley and accepts his selfishness at its face value by reminding herself of her painting:

> . . . her eye caught the salt cellar, which she had placed there to remind her, and she remembered that next morning she would move the tree further towards the middle, and her spirits rose so high at the thought of painting tomorrow that she laughed out loud at what Mr. Tansley was saying. Let him talk all night if he liked it. (p. 107)

Repeatedly we see Lily take this step to bring comfort to her actual life. Her work, she claims, will serve her so that she need not marry:

> He turned on her cheek the heat of love, its horror, its cruelty, its unscrupulosity. It scorched her, and Lily, looking at Minta being charming to Mr. Ramsay at the other end of the table, flinched for her exposed to those fangs, and was thankful. For at any rate, she said to herself catching sight of the salt cellar on the pattern, she need not marry, thank heaven: she need not undergo that degradation. She was saved from that dilution. She would move the tree rather more to the middle. (p. 118)

The final sentence shows clearly Lily's conscious decision to search for order in imaginative life. Lily feels relief that she need not fall in love and marry because, although "It is so beautiful, so exciting, this love . . . also it is the stupidest, the most barbaric of human passions" (p. 118). This sentiment of Lily regarding marriage and family life is somewhat reminiscent of one voiced by Vincent Van Gogh in a letter to his brother, Theo:

> And if, frustrated in the physical power, a man tries to create thoughts instead of children, he is still part of humanity.[28]

In his attempt to "paint men and women with that something of the eternal," Van Gogh, like Lily, endeavours to find the

the permanent unity in art which is lacking in actual life.

Art is discussed freely by Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse and in such terms as Fry might himself have used in a discussion of Post-Impressionist painting. Lily paints "Mrs. Ramsay sitting in the window with James" (p. 21) but first she reduces her to mass, line and colour --all of which are preoccupations of the Post-Impressionists. Lily is not prepared to tamper with the vivid colour as she sees it.

> The jacmanna was bright violet; the wall staring white. She would not have considered it honest to tamper with the bright violet and the staring white, since she saw them like that. (p. 23)

Like the Post-Impressionists, Lily considers it important to be true to her vision. She paints only what she sees with the inner eye, paying little attention to convention, "fashionable though it was, since Mr. Pauncefort's visit to see everything, pale, elegant, semi-transparent" (p. 23). She feels that she must be true to the rich vivid colour which she sees around her. She is very critical of her own work. In the early stages of painting Mrs. Ramsay she feels that, "she could have wept", because in her opinion, her work "was bad, it was bad, infinitely bad!" (p. 56) But even at this point, although she knows that she might have found it less difficult to paint in the more conventional manner, she cannot sacrifice her vision:

> She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealized; that was how Paunceforte would have seen it. But then she did not see it like that. She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a

> butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral. Of all that only a few random marks scrawled upon the canvas remained. (pp. 56-57)

Lily feels, like Van Gogh, that in spite of the difficulties involved in attempting to present one's vision, one must not give in to convention. The attempt must be made to paint what one sees, how one sees it with the inner eye. Van Gogh says in one of his letters that he agrees with his colleague Cyprien when Cyprien says in "J.K. Huysman's En Manage: "the most beautiful pictures are those one dreams about when smoking pipes in bed, but which one will never paint."[29] But, continues Van Gogh,

> One must attack them nonetheless, however incompetent one may feel before the unspeakable perfection, the glorious splendour of nature.[30]

Lily makes a similar claim when she admits to a sense of her own inadequacies:

> She could see it all so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked: it was when she took her brush in hand that the whole thing changed. It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from concept on to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for child. Such she often felt herself -struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage; to say: 'But this is what I see; this is what I see', and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her. (p. 23)

Like Van Gogh and Gauguin, Lily feels that the more intense colours help one to achieve "quietude and harmony." Van Gogh says that when given a choice he prefers "sunny and colourful effects." Their use of colour is one of the things which set the Post-Impressionists apart from the Impressionists. The importance of colour to the Post-Impressionists can be clearly seen in this statement made by Van Gogh:

> I should not be surprised if the impressionists soon find fault with my way of working, for it has been fertilized by Delacroix's ideas rather than by theirs. Because instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I see before my eyes, use colour more arbitrarily, in order to express myself forcibly.[31]

Violet, rich blue, scarlet, orange, green, blood-red, citron yellow, more often than not arranged side by side -these are the colours chosen by the Post-Impressionist artists. These are all bold, vivid colours which help to make the artists' statement. These colours or others of equal intensity are the colours chosen by Lily Briscoe. In her painting of Mrs. Ramsay the colours used are purple, staring white, bright violet, greens and blues. The staring white of Lily's wall reminds one of Van Gogh's preference for "the fierce hard white of a white wall".

Paunceforte is mentioned only briefly in the novel, but even so it is evident that his theory of art is the opposite of Lily's. He produces pictures that are "skimpy" and in which the colours are not solid. The artists who paint after Paunceforte's theory specialize in "soft greens" and pinks. Not for them are Lily's bright violets and bright yellows, purples and staring whites. Paunceforte represents the Impressionist artist of whom Gauguin says: "the impressionists study colour exclusively insofar as the decorative effect, but without freedom, retaining the shackles of verisimilitude . . . when they speak of art, what is it? A purely superficial art, full of affectation and purely material. There is no thought there."[32]

Like Van Gogh, Lily belongs to a group of artists "who love order and symmetry". Like the Post-Impressionists, too, she is unconcerned with verisimilitude and willingly sacrifices it for order, unity and symmetry. So, "what did she wish to indicate by the triangular purple shape, 'just there'?":

> It was Mrs. Ramsay reading to James . . . no one could tell it for a human shape. But she had made no attempt at likness, she said. For what reason had she introduced them then? . . . Why indeed? except that if there, in that corner, it was bright, here, in this, she felt the need of darkness. (p. 61)

Although the subjects, "mother and child" are "objects of universal veneration", Lily does not paint them in the conventional manner of Mr. Paunceforte. She reduces them to a "a purple shadow without irreverence"; for, although "she did not intend to disparage a subject which Raphael ahd treated divinely" (p. 200), she feels that there are other valid ways of seeing, "in which one might reverence them" --mother and child.

The reduction of mother and child to a triangular shape forces one to think of Cézanne's stipulation to "treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone, everything in proper perspective."[33] Like Cézanne, Lily reaches past the surface to the essential geometrical shape beneath, unlike Paunceforte who seeks to etherealize his objects. The geometrical aspect of Lily's work forces Lily to make her stroke bold, whereas Paunceforte's is light and timid.

To Lily colour and line are unavoidably intertwined with each other. Her painting proves that she feels like Gauguin that one is as nothing without the other. The two depend on each other, as Gauguin tells us:

> Can you really make me believe that drawing does not derive from colour, and vice versa? To prove this, I commit myself to reduce or enlarge one and the same drawing according to the colour with which I fill it up. Try to draw a head by Rembrandt in his exact proportions and then put on the colours of Rubens —you will see that misshapen produce you derive, while at the same time the colours will become unharmonious.[34]

The question is "one of the relations of masses, of lights and shadows" (p. 62). Mrs. Ramsay is, therefore, "a triangular purple shape". She is not one without the other. In this "triangular purple shape" colour and line merge. They become one as Gauguin would have them.

As Lily considers the problem of bringing unity to the picture, she discusses her work in terms reminiscent of Roger Fry:

> It was a question . . . how to connect this mass on the right with that on the left. he might do by bringing the line of the branch across so; or break the vacancy in the foreground by an object (James perhaps) so. But the danger was that by doing that, the unity of the whole might be broken. (p. 62)

Throughout the novel this question of order and unity and symmetry is one which bothers Lily. Ten years after she starts the picture she remembers that "There had been a problem about a foreground to her picture" (p. 207). She remembers that the picture needs to have the empty space in the middle filled so that there is, as Cézanne puts it, "a culminating point" in the middle, "closest to our eye," so that the edges of the objects recede to a centre on our horizon." This is a problem which remains with her until the last moment of the novel. How can she bring the disparate sides of the picture together; how create unity? Lily realizes, like Cézanne, that the two sides of the picture must be "directed towards a central point." It is for this reason that she considers moving James and later the tree to the centre of the picture. ~~The~~ problem is solved at the end of the novel:

> With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought laying down her brush in extreme fatigue. I have had my vision. (p. 237)

As Cézanne points out, "Studying the model and realizing it is sometimes very slow in coming for the artist." It takes Lily ten years before she realizes her vision, but finally with a single line down the middle she achieves unity as Mrs. Ramsay never does, thus completing the study of the differences which exist between actual and imaginative life, as Fry sees them. It is only by refusing to sacrifice even "one hair of her vision", however, that she finally triumphs.

By presenting Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe side by side in two different attempts to secure unity, Virginia Woolf dramatizes Fry's definitions of actual and imaginative life. The two, each of them creators in their own way, represent side by side, two different kinds of reality. Perhaps if we examine this statement made by Virginia Woolf in A Room of One's own, it will become clear what she is about in To the Lighthouse.

> What is meant by 'reality'? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable --now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrape of newspaper in the street, now a daffodil in the sun. It lights up a group in a room and stamps some casual saying. It overwhelms one walking home beneath the stars and makes the silent world more real than the world of speech-- and then there it is again in an omnibus in the uproar of Piccadilly. But whatever it touches it fixes and makes permanent. This is what remains over when the skin of the day has been cast into the hedge; that is what is left of past time and of our loves and hates. Now the writer . . . has the chance to live more than other people in the presence of this reality. It is his business to find it and collect it and cummunicate it to the rest of us. So at least I infer from reading Lear or Emma or La Recherche du temps perdu. For the reading of these books seems to perform a curious couching of the senses; one sees more intensely afterwards; the world seems bared of its covering and given an intenser life. (p. 108)

Having examined Mrs. Ramsay's attempt at unity and Lily Briscoe's it is time now to turn to Virginia Woolf's attempt in To the Lighthouse. Unity is achieved quite simply in Mrs. Dalloway because, although the thoughts of the characters range freely over a number of years, they are bound on all sides because they are placed against the commonplace events of one day in the life of Mrs. Dalloway. In To the Lighthouse ten years divide the first and last parts of the novel. This arrangement seems at first to defy the rigid unity and order generally favoured by Virigini Woolf. However, there is unity in spite of this passage of time, because many of the events begun in the first part of the novel are left incomplete until the final section. For example, the trip to the Lighthouse arranged and discussed extensively in Part I, is not realized until Part III of the novel; Lily's painting, started in Part I is completed in Part III.

Part II of the novel serves effectively to bridge the gap of ten years between Parts I and III. Section I of Part II is a continuance of the day represented in Part I. In this section the Ramsays and their guests go to bed:

> One by one the lamps were all extinguished, except that Mr. Carmichal, who liked to lie awake a little reading Virgil, kept his candle burning rather longer than the rest. (p. 143)

The last section of Part II ends with the household coming awake:

> Nothing broke their sleep until the birds beginning and the dawn weaving their thin voices into its whiteness . . . the sun lifted the curtains, broke the veil on their eyes, and Lily Briscoe stirring in her sleep clutched the blankets. . . . Her eyes opened wide. Here she was again, she thought, sitting bolt upright in bed. Awake. (p. 163)

Although we are conscious that ten years have now passed since the family and guests went to bed at the start of Part II, this arrangement, depicting the household awakening as if only one night has passed, lulls the reader into passing lightly over th the years which divide the two parts. The narrative technique in "Time Passes" differs from that of Parts I and III. In this part there is no delving into the character's minds. Instead we meet an omniscient, third person narrator who ignores detail and gives a general, and in many ways superficial, account of the ten years. Such expressions as "night and day"; "night after night"; and "summer and winter" help to create a sense of time passing rapidly.

The sense that Part III takes up at the point where Part I leaves off is intensified because many of the characters who appear in Part I reappear in Part III and seem hardly to have changed. Mr. Ramsay and his children are still present. Lily is there and resumes her painting just as if she had left off painting it just the day before. Mr. Carmichael is there and his appearance in Part III is similar to that in Part I. In Part I "Mr. Carmichael shuffled past . . . with a book beneath his arm" (p. 49). In Part III he appears in like manner: "old Mr. Carmichael stood beside her . . . a French novel . . . in his hand" (p. 236). The character most central to Part I is not present in person, of course. Mrs. Ramsay is dead. Strangely enough, however, her presence is felt as strongly as the characters actually there. She is vaguely present in James' thoughts; she is present in everything Lily says and thinks; the 'core' of her being is present in the triangular purple shape of Lily's painting. Other less important characters from Part I appear in Lily's subconscious as well --Mr. Tansley, Minta Doyle and Paul.

Arranged as it is, therefore, Part III of the novel repeats with a difference Part I, in the manner of Post-Impressionist painting, as Lily recaps subconsciously the essential incidents of Part I. Virginia Woolf is faced with a problem similar to that of Lily --how to connect this mass with that. Like Lily, she succeeds in creating the necessary unity clinging to her vision. Having Lily subconsciously recap the essential events of Part I, creates effectively the balance necessary in a work of art. As we examine with Lily the past of Part I, it dawns on us that we have merged before us the past the future and the present. That is, what had been the future of Part I is the present of Part III. As Lily recalls her last visit to this home it is as though time stops and the three different time periods become one. For example, in part I Mrs. Ramsay promises James that if the weather does not permit the trip to the Lighthouse then it would be fine another day: "And even if it isn't fine tomorrow . . . it will be fine another day" (p. 31). In Part III we are brought face to face with this fine day of the future even as Lily leads us through the day on which the promise is made.

"Time Passes", although it separates the other two parts of the novel, does not create a gap between the two. It appears as a slight pause in which time, past, present and future, is suspended. This technique prepares the reader for the merging of the different time periods in Part III. Part II creates the unity desired by Roger Fry and the Post-Impressionists.

NOTES

[1] John Hawley Roberts, "'Vision and Design' in Virginia Woolf", p. 835.

[2] Emily Stripes Watts, Ernest Hemingway and the Arts, p. xiii.

[3] E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel, p. 87.

[4] Forster, p. 85.

[5] John Keith Johnstone, The Bloomsbury Group, p. 135.

[6] Roger Fry, "An Essay in Aesthetics", p. 22.

[7] Johnstone, p. 145.

[8] Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown", p. 22.

[9] Johnstone, p. 130.

[10] Kenneth Clarke, "Introduction" to Last Lectures by Roger Fry, p. xvi.

[11] Paul Cezanne: Letters, p. 264.

[12] Roger Fry, "An Essay in Aesthetics", p. 21.

[13] Virginia Woolf, "Preface" Modern Library edition.

[14] John Hawley Roberts, p. 837.

[15] John Hawley Roberts, p. 837.

[16] All quotations from Mrs. Dalloway and To The Lighthouse are taken from the 1974 Penquin editions of the novels; p. 11.

[17] John Hawley Roberts, p. 839.

[18] Johnstone, p. 151.

[19] Johnstone, p. 170.

[20] Johnstone, p. 175.

[21] Johnstone, p. 180.

[22] Virginia Woolf, A Room of one's Own, p. 105.

[23] Herschel B. Chipp, p. 60.

[24] Herschel B. Chipp, p. 60.

[25] Virginia Woolf, "Pictures", in The Moment and Other Essays, p. 142

[26] Herschel B. Chipp, p. 65.

[27] Johnstone, p. 150.

[28] Herschel B. Chipp, p. 35.

[29] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 492.

[30] Van Gogh, Vol. III, p. 492.

[31] Herschel B. Chipp, p. 34.

[32] Herschel B. Chipp, p. 65.

[33] Paul Cezanne: Letters, p. 234.

[34] Herschel B. Chipp, p. 64.

CONCLUSION

In the foregone chapters we have made a thorough study of the theories of Virginia Woolf. Furthermore, we have compared them with the theories of Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Roger Fry, and seen that the resemblance is overwhelming; too much so, indeed, to be attributed to mere coincidence. We have found that in her theoretical statements and in her novels Virginia Woolf discusses many of the subjects which, although they may be commonplace considerations for the painter, usually remain outside the realm or interest of the novelist.

We have discovered that in her approach to portraiture and character development she differs remarkably from that of the conventional writers around her, and instead bears a close resemblance to the work and attitudes of Cézanne, Van Gogh, Gauguin and Roger Fry. Her interest in colour and line, and her determined attempts to "connect this mass with that" could surely only have come from a prolonged exposure to the work of these artist whom she admired and who were constantly under discussion at the informal gatherings in Bloomsbury.

Her novels show clearly her, for a writer, inordinate interest in formal relationships in the work of art. Indeed, she focuses on these formal relationships to the exclusion of conventional plot and character development. Her novels not only exhibit this interest in form by their own physical arrangements, but they also, especially To The Lighthouse, contain extensive discussions on the subject. Indeed, To The Lighthouse might very easily be called a fictional expansion upon Fry's discussion in "An Essay in Aesthetics". Virginia Woolf shows that she has an excellent understanding of Fry's theories, for in To The Lighthouse she draws a distinct picture of the relationship between art and life, and shows clearly that she understands the limitations which are inherent in actual life. Her comparison of formal unity in human relationships with formal unity in art is in every sense a continuation of Fry's work, "An Essay in Aesthetics".

Moreover, we have seen that like the Post-Impressionists and Roger Fry, Virginia Woolf turns her back on conventional methods of creating. Like them too she insists on autonomy in her work and decides that her novels need not conform to the rules of everyday reality. She aims, not for a recognisable replica of actual life, but for the pure life free from all considerations of photographic representation. Like the art of the Post-Impressionist, her novels present a life freed from the bonds of actual life —a life in which the everyday emotions such as joy and sorrow are ruthlessly subordinated to considerations of form.

There is perhaps only one important aspect of the work of the Post-Impressionist artists which is not discussed by

Virginia Woolf. This is colour. It is easy to see why colour does not come under discussion in Virginia Woolf's many essays on theories of art. She is, after all, a writer. Her medium is therefore not paint, but words. This being the case there is absolutely no need for her to be concerned with colour. This omission in her critical writings is more than adequately made up for in her novels, however. In To The Lighthouse especially she shows that her understanding of the Post-Impressionists' use of colour could not be faulted. By the introduction of Pauncefort with his delicate hues and by the comparison made between Paunceforte and Lily Briscoe Virginia Woolf shows that she recognizes the distinction between the Impressionists and the Post-Impressionists. Furthermore, Lily's painting with its vivid colours is in every respect comparable to those of the Post-Impressionists.

The two novels discussed, Mrs. Dalloway and To the Lighthouse display the "consciousness of purpose" which Fry sees to be an integral part of the work of art and which he found in the work of the Post-Impressionists. That is, "the consciousness of a peculiar relation to sympathy with the man who made this thing in order to arouse precisely the sensations we experience."[1] Indeed we do experience exactly the what the author wants to experience. We exult in the perfection of the form of the completed work and forego completely, and without regret, the emotional responses which are typical of actual life. That is why we feel joy instead of sorrow when

Septimus dies. That is why we accept Mrs. Ramsay's death without succumbing to grief. That is why we accept the inevitability of the events of the two novels. Virginia Woolf explains herself how this is made possible:

> In spite of the fact that our pleasure is less direct, less the result of feeling strongly in sympathy with some pleasure or sorrow, it has a fineness, a sweetness, which the more direct writers fail to give us. . . .
>
> Besides this fineness and sweetness we get another pleasure which comes when the mind is freed from the perpetual demand of the novelist that we feel with his characters. By cutting off the responses which are called out in actual life, the novelist frees us to take delight . . . in things in themselves. . . . Then we see the mind at work . . . its power to bring out relations in things and disparities which are covered over when we are acting by habit or driven on by the ordinary impulses.[2]

This is equivalent to the significance or 'idea' which Fry finds in the paintings of the Post-Impressionists. So once again we see that Virginia Woolf voices the attitudes and theories of the Post-Impressionists, but couched in the language of Roger Fry. This leads us to conclude that Virginia Woolf was indeed influenced by the work of the Post-Impressionists, but that much of the influence was received through, and encouraged by Roger Fry. There is every indication that Virginia Woolf gained much of her understanding of the work of Post-Impressionists through the informal tutelage of Roger Fry.

It is time now to answer Emily Stripes Watts' question. It must be answered in the affirmative: A writer of prose fiction can borrow profoundly from another art form. He can utilize in language the techniques of a painter; Virginia

Woolf certainly does. In both Mrs. Dalloway and To the Lighthouse she turns repeatedly to the standards set by the Post-Impressionists and by Roger Fry. It is clear that the painting of the Post-Impressionists has had a prodigious influence on the work of Virginia Woolf.

NOTES

[1] Roger Fry, "An Essay in Aesthetics", Vision and Design, p. 20.

[2] Virginia Woolf, "Phases of Fiction", Granite and Rainbow, p. 122.

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